

History of Satyananda Yoga in Greece

Volume One with Swami Satyananda Saraswati

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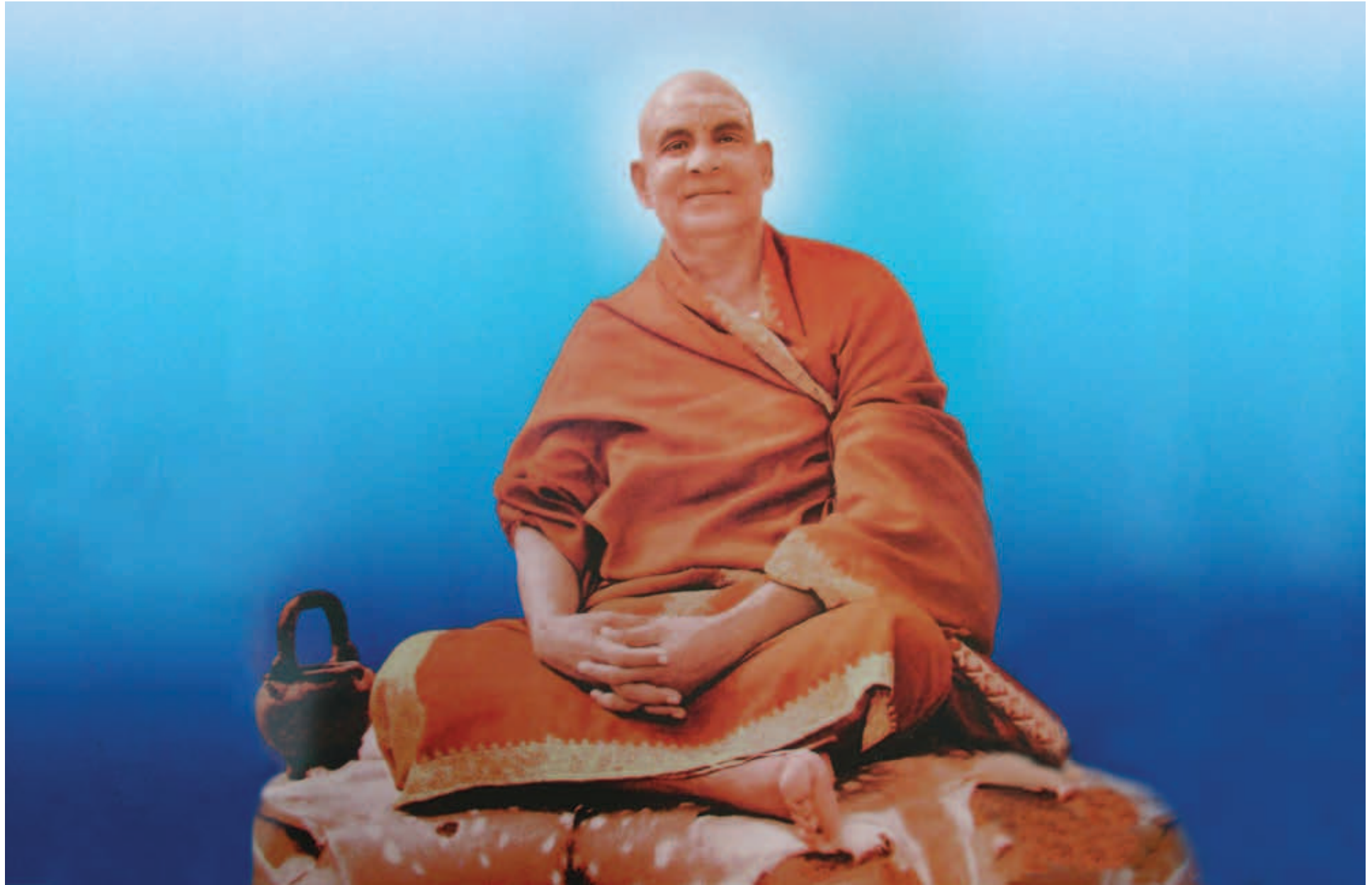
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In humility
we offer this dedication to
Swamí Sivananda Saraswatí,
who inspired, guided and initiated
Swamí Satyananda Saraswatí
into the secrets of yoga.



Thank You ...

There comes a time, when one is able to stand aside and gaze with silent awe, and with a profoundly grateful heart, at the beauty of the mysterious grace that has coloured and shaped every moment of life. Today is such a time.

On this day we end our humble endeavour to tell the tale of how two very great men sanctified the land of Greece with a cornucopia of gifts and graces. This tale is told in two books; one describing the visits to Greece by Swami Satyananda, our guru, and the other the visits by his successor, Swami Niranjanananda. As I finish reading them, a feeling of overwhelming praise and thanks fills my soul and heart. What words can one find to adequately express appropriate gratitude, not only for that which they have given to me personally, but also for what they have so freely and selflessly given to an entire nation and its people? Swami Satyananda told us many times, "The law of the Lord is love; the language of the Lord is silence." It is impossible for me to find the words to express the intensity of my feelings of gratitude to our guru, either on behalf of myself, or on behalf of the many Greek people who have been blessed to experience the presence and grace of both spiritual masters. I pray that the brevity of my words may allow the silence in my heart to reach the silence in the heart of my guru, whose law is always and only: love.

Today is also a time to thank the countless men, women, and children, from Greece and abroad, who have assisted and supported Satyanandashram Hellas, from the first day of my arrival in Kalamata until today, and those who will continue to do so in the future. To begin and encourage the growth of the yogic teachings in Greece, and to found

an ashram and guide an umbrella organization of various yoga centres, was not my sole accomplishment. Far from it. The path of Satyanandashram Hellas is paved with a very beautiful mosaic full of vibrant colours and radiant jewels.

Each individual tile in the mosaic has its own shape, brilliance, and purpose in the overall design. Some are large, and others are tiny; some have a clear sheen, and others are rather cloudy; some tiles have equal sides, some are not quite so balanced, and others are a little quirky; some are glued well into the path, while others have gone missing; and some are very grandly placed near the centre of the mosaic, whereas others lie as close to the far edge as they can get. And yet each tile depends on the others to complete the whole, and to give meaning to the mosaic's existence, even those that are missing, have been stolen, or are badly chipped. Each tile is equal though not the same; each tile plays its part as only it can; and each tile, present or not present, is irreplaceable.

To name all the people who have contributed to the growth and development of Satyanandashram Hellas, and who have selflessly supported and assisted both myself and the ashram and yoga centres, would require a third book and an astounding memory. Some names were never known, as some who have helped gave what they had to give and quietly went on their way, without any of us noticing their arrival or departure. Some people have remained with us since the beginning, and others have played their part and moved on as was their role and destiny. There has never been a time, since 1976, when I have not been supported by many people, particularly in Greece, who have given selflessly and tirelessly in order to accomplish the mission of our guru. Some have given of their talents and labour; some have given money and other goods; some have freely given their counsel, specific knowledge, and advice; some have provided

transport or accommodation; some have arranged lectures, workshops, seminars and other programs; some have taken care of those shy about visiting the ashram or learning yoga, while others have been hospitable to foreigners, visitors or people alone and in need; some have provided meals, sewn clothes, and spent seemingly endless hours cleaning or gardening with inadequate tools, and others have gained back pain from sitting in bad chairs while folding brochures and licking envelopes; and some have given their entire life in service to their guru and the accomplishment of his mission in this part of the world. To all, my thanks and the thanks of all who have, and are, and will be a part of Satyanandashram Hellas. There are also those who did not directly contribute to our development, but who cared for and supported those who did. To all husbands and wives, to all children and other family members, and to all partners, lovers, friends and colleagues, who endured long tedious hours of isolation, and who could never understand why their loved ones undertook seemingly pointless hours of seva yoga; to all, our thanks. Many people who work in the public service, and various government officials have also assisted us, as have others from the corporate world. Others from small businesses, from various trades, from the arts and crafts communities, from hotels, taxis, and restaurants, and from healthcare and educational institutions, have been exceedingly generous with their support, advice, gifts and time; again, our thanks to you.

As well as thanking all the Greek sannyasins, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the great number of swamis and sannyasins from other countries who have served their guru in Greece by contributing their skills, time and energy at Satyanandashram Hellas. Thank you.

My family in Australia has always been exceedingly generous in their encouragement and support to both

myself and Satyanandashram Hellas. To all family members, thank you.

There are many people who are responsible for the compilation and production of both of these books. Many who recorded their experiences some years ago and others more recently. To all involved, thank you.

And to all who may not be on the above list and who should be, our thanks to you also.

Finally, I would like to thank Swami Niranjanananda for giving us all, at Satyanandashram Hellas, this opportunity to recall the beautiful memories of the visits to Greece of our two beloved spiritual masters. The compilation of these two books has been a tremendous journey, and given us much joy, as the past resurfaced with fresh and deeper meanings that illustrated, over and over again, the abundant grace and blessings our gurus have showered upon us.

A new chapter, in the life of us all, has begun with the mahasamadhi of our beloved Swami Satyananda. I have not met any disciple who does not continue to feel his presence with them. Indeed, the spirit of our guru seems even more intimate and closer to us. It was a great honour for many Greek people to attend the Shodashi Pooja at Rikhiapeeth and the Shraddhanjali Saptah at Ganga Darshan, and be with other disciples from all over the world. Many memories of our guru came to mind: memories of humour, tenderness, wisdom and joy, as well as others of grief, sorrow, and yearning. But the most beautiful memory of all, was the memory of his instant smile of deep recognition and love, as he stepped on to the soil of Greece, and placed the first tile at the very centre of the dazzling and resplendent mosaic that became and is Satyanandashram Hellas.

Om Tat Sat
Swami Sivamurti Saraswati



Swami Satyananda's visits to Greece: 1978—1985

The History of Satyananda Yoga in Greece Volume One is a collection of all Swami Satyananda's recorded lectures during his visits to Greece from 1978–1985. Teachings VI published by Yoga Publications Trust, is a collection of some of those lectures, which are included in this book, together with previously unpublished lectures and satsangs from his tours around Greece.

1978: Swami Satyananda arrived on 17 January, accompanied by Swami Amritananda (India) and spent four days in Athens and Kalamata. He spoke at the yoga centres, gave public lectures, held satsangs, and was interviewed by the media.

1979: Swami Satyananda arrived on 18 August, accompanied by Swami Amritananda (India) and spent three days in Athens where he inaugurated the yoga centre.

1980: Swami Satyananda arrived on 29 April for three days. His program in Athens included lectures, satsangs and media interviews, as well as a special satsang organized for medical practitioners.

1981: Swami Satyananda arrived in April for his first visit to Thessaloniki, accompanied by Swami Amritananda (India). He gave several lectures at various venues in the city and presided over the Pan-Hellenic Conference on Yoga and Health at the Nepheli Hotel.

1982: Swami Satyananda arrived for a five-day visit to Athens and Thessaloniki, accompanied by Swami Satyasangananda (India). Due to the success of his 1981 visit, a great deal of interest was shown by the media. He inaugurated a new yoga centre in Thessaloniki and a new ashram at Pendeli in Athens. His talks and lectures centred on the various branches of integral yoga such as bhakti yoga, karma yoga, raja yoga and jnana yoga.

1984: Swami Satyananda arrived on 24 April for a six-week tour of Greece accompanied by Swami Satyasangananda (India). The emphasis of his many programs was on yoga, our priceless heritage. He began the tour in Crete and then travelled to other Greek islands and cities including Chania, Heraklion, Rethimno, and St Nicolaos in Crete; Alexandroupolis, Athens, Kalamata, Katerini, Mitilini, Patra, Rhodes, Sparta, Volos and Thessaloniki.

He left Greece on 20 May to travel to Italy for a three-week tour, and returned to Greece for two weeks. He celebrated Guru Poornima at the Nepheli Hotel, Thessaloniki.

1985: Swami Satyananda arrived in June accompanied by Swami Satyasangananda (India). He inaugurated the new ashram at Paiania (twenty-three kilometres out of Athens) on 29 June for ten days. Over 800 people attended this event, and stayed on to celebrate Guru Poornima on 2 July. He left Greece on 7 July.

Satyanandashram Hellas Our Vision

The ways of the world are many, but the way to God, to spirit, to divinity, is one.

Dedication to the upliftment of others, seeing others in oneself and oneself in others; this is the ultimate yoga.

There is no other way to change our limited, egocentric vision to a cosmic vision.

This is the path and this is the yoga of the next century – call it 'freedom yoga'.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Each individual has the right to experience freedom, harmony, and peace. Satyanandashram Hellas exists to further that right, through providing access to the teachings and healing properties of yoga that seek to unite people regardless of race, gender, class, or creed.

Under the inspiration of her guru, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Satyanandashram Hellas was established by Swami Sivamurti Saraswati in 1976. Our residential ashram at Paiania (east of Athens) was founded by her in 1984. It is a non-profit organization that aims to fulfil the yogic mission, to “carry the message of yoga from shore to shore and from door to door”, which was instituted by Swami Satyananda and continued by his successor, Swami Niranjanananda, and their lineage. Swami Satyananda appointed Swami Sivamurti to be the acharya of Satyanandashram Hellas and he inaugurated the ashram in 1985.

The town of Paiania is regarded by many as the birth place of the philosopher, Socrates (469-399 BCE), and the renowned orator, Demosthenes (384-322 BCE).

Little remains today of the ancient town, one of the oldest in Attica, but many tourists still visit Paiania today to see the famous Koutouki cave which is situated on the eastern slopes of Mt Hymettos on the road to the ashram. The land, on which Satyanandashram Hellas lies, has a long history of spiritual activity. Two Greek Orthodox monasteries and several churches are the ashram's immediate neighbours. The ashram itself is said to have once been a sanctuary where the esoteric Dionysian mysteries were taught to ancient bhaktas. Today we commonly associate the god Dionysus with wine and sexual excess, but this was not the association in ancient Greece. With the Orphic and Eleusian mysteries, the Dionysian mysteries were the teachings most closely linked to yogic thought and esoteric knowledge. Towering over these ancient sanctuaries, on the summit of Mt Hymettos, was a statue of Zeus, the father of Dionysus and the mightiest of all the Greek gods. Dionysus' counterpart in yoga and tantra is Shiva, and the energies, symbols and bhakti practices associated with both gods are very similar. The Dionysian energies are associated with the path of self-knowledge and thus appropriate to the paths of yoga and sannyasa.

Satyanandashram Hellas offers training in the sannyasa gurukul tradition, in yogic practices, and in yoga teacher training. The practices of Satyananda Yoga work on all levels of the body and mind, to achieve better health and wellbeing, and to develop contentment and tranquillity. They also awaken the inner potential of each person and enhance creativity, concentration, and positivity. They reduce tension and stress, and enable an individual to achieve more in life, work and relationships. Satyananda Yoga combines modern scientific thought with traditional ancient wisdom. It offers a holistic style of yoga that is designed to meet the needs of modern humanity. It takes

the benefits of yoga into the wider community, through collaborating with professionals in such fields as health and rehabilitation, education, ecology, business, prisons, care of the aged, care of the disabled, space programs, and the armed services. It undertakes research into the effects of yoga on the mind and body, and offers people a healthy lifestyle which can be incorporated into their existing one.

The Paiania ashram is supported by Satyananda Yoga Centres in the town of Paiania and in the cities of Athens and Thessaloniki. There are also independent yoga centres and yoga teachers in Athens, Chania, Drama, Kavala, Larissa, Mitilini, Patra, Thessaloniki, Volos, and Xanthi, which assist and support the activities and teachings of Satyanandashram Hellas. These centres and teachers act as stepping stones to bring people into closer contact with the ashram.

The ashram is constructed around an inner courtyard and the buildings include dormitories, kitchen, library, audiovisual facilities, offices and a computer department, two indoor halls, a large outdoor auditorium seating five hundred people, and two outdoor workshop areas. Close to the ashram there is a piece of land that is cultivated by the sannyasins with organically-grown vegetables.

Seva yoga projects, for visitors, as well as residents, include gardening, organic farming, arts and crafts, video subtitling and audio transcription of yoga discourses and seminars, the production of the Greek newsletter Satyanandashram Hellas Newsheet; music groups that study kirtans, bhajans and ragas and record kirtans; and the projects of Satyananda Math that include the collection of goods and medicines for Paramahamsaji's Rikhia neighbours (in association with Sivananda Math), and helping the needy and disadvantaged in Greece and the Balkan countries.

The programs offered at the ashram include seminars and opportunities to experience the various aspects of yoga such as hatha yoga, karma yoga, seva yoga, bhakti yoga, kriya yoga, tattwa shuddhi, nada yoga, raja yoga and meditation practices, yoga for children, yoga for women, yoga for men, living consciously, ashram lifestyle, mind management, emotional management and health management courses. A Satyananda Yoga instructors' course is available in both Greek and English. Yogic lifestyle courses are offered to groups from different countries. Sannyasa life experience courses are also held periodically, and regular times are set aside for karma and jignasu sannyasins to come to the ashram for renewal of commitment and further study. Gurukul programs are held on a bi-monthly basis for children and adolescents. It is a time of fun and alternative education. Individual yoga classes and personal programs are also available.

Celebrations and festivals are held during the year particularly at Guru Poornima, Navaratri, Sivaratri, Christmas, New Year and Easter. An Open Day is also held each year. Wandering seminars are times when the focus is on spontaneity, joy, living close to nature, and learning how to adapt to change. These seminars are led by sannyasins who have spent many summers wandering over the mainland of Greece and many of its islands. Yoga sun and sea seminars are also offered at this time. Public talks, lectures and seminars are given outside the ashram by qualified sannyasins, on a range of topics including nada yoga, kriya yoga, yogic diet and nutrition, yoga in education, to name just a few.

Our source of inspiration, and the foundation of all our activities, is derived from the abundance of love, wisdom, and creative energy that flows continually from our guru, Swami Satyananda and his successor, Swami Niranjanananda. We are also blessed by the grace and gifts of our paramguru, Swami Sivananda, and all the spiritual masters and wise yogis of our Saraswati lineage including Swami Satyasangananda, who has visited us in the past with Swami Satyananda, and revisited us in 2010 during Ashwin Navaratri.

Although based in Greece, with a primary focus on that country and those of the neighbouring Balkans, Satyanandashram Hellas welcomes people from all over the world, and our attitude to the public is based on courtesy and respect for individual talents and abilities. Satyanandashram Hellas strives to create an environment in our ashram and yoga centres that is based on freedom and goodwill, and which encourages understanding of different cultures, faiths, and traditions. We endeavour to meet each individual on their level and without confrontation, and we embrace unity through an appreciation of diversity.

Hari Om Tat Sat



Homage to Paramahamsaji

Swami Sivamurti Saraswati

The second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita ends with a description of the highest state of consciousness a human being can attain. “When your love is deep enough,” Lord Krishna has been telling Arjuna, “every selfish attachment falls away, and with it, all frustration, all insecurity, all despair.” Arjuna asks, enthusiastically, “How can I recognize such a person when I see him? What are the marks of the man who lives always in wisdom, completely established in himself? Tell me how he talks, how he acts, how he conducts himself when under attack?” And Lord Krishna replies:

“He lives in wisdom who sees himself in all, and all in him. Who’s the Lord of love, has consumed every selfish desire and sense tormenting the heart. Not agitated by grief, nor hankering after pleasure, he lives free from lust, and fear, and anger, fretted no more by selfish attachments. He is not elated by good fortune, nor depressed by bad. Such is the seer. This is the supreme state . . . Attain thou this, and pass from death to immortality.”

For me, these verses summarize Swami Satyananda’s life. He was a shining example of all the great qualities mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita and yet he lived the life of a simple man with so many human qualities.

In the early days I spent with him in Bihar School of Yoga (BSY), Munger, his every minute was given over to others. This began with the steady stream of disciples, devotees and visitors who came from all over the world for every conceivable reason: to get an interview, to settle



some question, to argue with his opinions, to get help on disciplining an unruly child, to settle marital relationships, to seek spiritual light or knowledge.

He made a point of always discovering a person’s interests and skills, and had that ability to draw out the very best in a person. He brought out people’s qualities, their gifts, so enabling them to express themselves creatively. Their work then became a sadhana, their profession became a sadhana; developing their abilities became their spiritual sadhana and took them closer to their goal. People just blossomed under his touch, under

his glance. He had just one attitude in mind, to do good to everybody.

During that time he had not the slightest privacy. Swami Satyananda once said that a saint’s life should be an open book. Nothing should be hidden. And in his own life, in the ashram or during his many tours, indeed nothing was. His solitude, if at all, was taken in the midst of many. It was only much later, after he left Munger and moved to Rikhia that this changed.

In the middle of all this apparent chaos, however, Paramahamsaji kept order by an exact inner attention to detail and to time. He was punctual to the minute. In fact, he always arrived at least ten minutes prior to his meetings or programs. He would never keep anyone waiting.

In the ashram, Paramahamsaji’s day began very early, around three or four, and sometimes even earlier. I recall when I was getting up very early to do my kriya sadhana, no matter how early I got up, when I crossed the space between my room and the hall where I did my practice, Paramahamsaji was invariably standing at the door just watching, and showing me, by his quiet and immovable presence, that he was supporting me in what I was doing.

The ashram was always an odd collection of many different men, women and children, from different parts of the world: swamis, sannyasins, devotees, visitors, guests. They were all so varied in their backgrounds and dispositions that once I heard them referred to as the ashram menagerie. This was because everywhere Paramahamsaji went, he attracted people whose love for him released tremendous reserves of loyalty, courage and selfless service, which utterly transformed their lives. Whenever we came into his presence, even if it was just a few moments, something was always said, done or felt that uplifted us and gave us strength to continue. It became apparent, within a very short space of time, that

some of the rumours that I'd heard earlier that he knew everything – one's motive, thoughts, words, deeds – was actually true; it became a living reality to me, and I knew that I could not do anything, or think anything, without his knowledge of it. Various experiences brought this to light.

Once in Switzerland, we were at a convention in Zinal, and I was invited to have lunch with Paramahamsaji. After his morning satsang, we had been invited to an Indian devotee's room in the hotel where his wife was preparing special Indian dishes. Now, Paramahamsaji always left a lecture with tremendous speed; he very seldom walked slowly or waited for people to come up to congratulate him. This meant that those who wished to keep up with him had to move almost as quickly. So we were racing out of the lecture hall, when I was confronted by a girl in a very emotional state, and she said, "Oh please. I must have a word with you." I said, "Could we have that word later on, because I'm in a bit of a rush." She said, "It's terribly important. I have to speak to you now." I said, "I really am in a hurry. But straight after lunch, if you want, come back here." She said, "I have to speak to you now. It's terribly important."

I said, "What is it?" She said, "I want to have my head shaved." I said, "Ok, I'll arrange that for you after lunch." She said, "Oh, please, I have to find out where, and how, and when." By that time I was starting to get worried because so much time had passed, perhaps not so much time had, but in Paramahamsaji's life, in a few seconds, one does a lot. So I became quite abrupt with her, and said, "I said after lunch." And I rushed up to the luncheon room. I knocked on the door and the host opened the door and greeted me with a smile, and just as I was about to put one foot in the room, Paramahamsaji, who was already seated at the table, spun around and said, "No," in no uncertain tone, "No! Not her." And so the host politely



Swami Satyananda greeting crowds gathered for Sat Chandi Mahayajna 2009

smiled and closed the door, and I stepped back. I knew immediately why he'd said that. Because I hadn't taken sufficient care of the girl's problem. I had not handled the situation correctly. My attitude had not been correct. So I knew what I had to do. I went down and found her and arranged for the shaving.

Paramahamsaji's voice was always within a certain range of pitch. It never went too high; it never went too low. It was melodious and sweet. He never raised his voice, even when he wanted to get a point across. The tone of his voice was always pleasing and gentle to the ear. It seemed soft, but it carried far.

There are times when nothing one can say is as powerful as saying nothing. To argue brings one down to the level of those with whom one argues. Silence convinces another of their folly, and one wishes they had not spoken so quickly. I remember an incident in France after Swami Satyananda had just delivered a magnificent lecture. Hundreds of people came. Everyone seemed inspired and uplifted, freer from their difficulties and problems. We were leaving the hall, when a man burst forward. He said that he didn't agree with various points in Paramahamsaji's lecture and confronted him quite aggressively. Suddenly the whole foyer was quiet. The man raised his voice so high, as he put forward his point of view, that he could be heard by all. Swami Satyananda just stood there, very still, watching him, with a sweet expression on his face. Whenever the man paused, Paramahamsaji just said, "Yes, that's right. Mm." Or he said nothing. After a while the man's anger and aggression died down, and he just remained silent watching Paramahamsaji, while he watched him, and the rest of us watched them both.

Eventually, the man began asking Swami Satyananda's opinion on what he had just said on the Bhagavad Gita. When the whole discussion was over, Paramahamsaji

quietly adjusted his dhoti around his shoulders, and moved on. He said nothing more on the matter.

In all the years I have known him, I have never heard Paramahamsaji say anything unnecessarily. He never speaks just for the sake of speaking, but for the sake of those present. We all remembered this incident long after it was over, but Paramahamsaji forgot it immediately. In a world where there was so much to be done, and to be done quickly, there was no time afforded to petty slights. Above are just some of the experiences I have been fortunate enough to live through with Swami Satyananda. Definitely, it is not possible for me to make an accurate assessment of the personality of Paramahamsa Satyananda with whom I lived for only a short period of time, but who was responsible for transforming my whole life.

|| *“Everything that happens to you, will happen for your good. There will be nothing negative; everything will be positive”.* ||

Beginnings

Paramahamsaji is calling you—NOW!

Swami Sivamurti Saraswati

In 1975 I wrote to about ten different ashrams in India asking for admittance. They all wrote back letters of acceptance. One of the letters came from the Bihar School of Yoga (BSY). At that time I knew nothing about BSY, nor did I know of Swami Satyananda Saraswati. However, there was something about the way their letter was written that touched me, so I put all the other letters aside; purchased a plane ticket and got on the plane; and then another plane, a train, and a taxi, and I was there at BSY.

When I arrived at the ashram, Swami Satyananda was on tour somewhere in India, and so I stayed and waited for his return. At first, everything at BSY seemed very strange to me. I had expected all the swamis to be meditating under trees, giving saintly advice, and holding discourses on yoga. Nothing like that was going on. Everyone was cleaning, sweeping, working, running from



one department to another, and doing a myriad of things. I remember writing in my diary on my second night, “I think I have come to the wrong place.” However, Swami Atmananda, who was the director of the ashram at that time, said to me, “Wait. Just wait.” So I waited. And the days turned into weeks. I passed my time participating in the various ashram activities.

And then, unexpectedly, Swami Atmananda one day came up to me and said, “Swami Satyananda is calling you. Come.” Immediately apprehension entered my heart and I said, “I am eating my lunch now. I’ll come after I have finished.” She looked at me and said, “Well, all right.” She went back and must have told Swami Satyananda as, within a flash, she was back and said, “Swami Satyananda is calling you NOW!” So I ran.

He was in a tent with two other swamis who were sitting like statues, absolutely motionless. Neither of them looked at me. One was in profile; the other appeared to be looking into space. Paramahamsaji was reclining with his eyes closed. When he opened his eyes, and there was eye contact between us, there was an immediate recognition, and I knew that I had found the person I had been looking for all my life. From that moment until now, there has never been a doubt in my mind as to whom I was offering my life, and who would be guiding me.

His beautiful smile

One day, in January 1976, I was sitting on the lawn at BSY making malas. Paramahamsaji came out and also sat down on the lawn. Different disciples came, and went, and spoke to him. I never knew what they were talking about, or what he was saying. It was just a never-ending stream of people coming and going. I had a small camera with me and I wanted to take his photograph. I asked him, of course, because I’d heard that, if you took a photograph

without asking him, or if you recorded him without asking, then no photograph nor recording eventuated.

I wanted to get a particular photograph of him smiling. I wanted to catch his glorious smile. He had a way of smiling that was just so attractive, and I wanted to catch just that expression on the camera. As I remember, he was lying on the grass, and one of his disciples came up to have a letter dictated. While he dictated the letter to her, I was poised with the camera. He was looking very serious. The thought flashed through my mind, "I wish he'd smile that beautiful smile that I love so much." And, just at that moment, he smiled that beautiful smile at the disciple, and I clicked the camera and captured it. It was the first photograph I ever took of him. After that I took many more. However, that photograph is one of my favourites.

Initiation into poorna sannyasa

During the ensuing days, Paramahamsaji would call me and speak to me about sannyasa and I knew without a doubt that this was the path I had been looking for and on the 5th February 1976, I was initiated by him into poorna sannyasa.

One day Paramahamsaji said to me ...

One day Paramahamsaji said to me, "Sivamurti, go to Greece, and see if the Greek people are interested in yoga. Be prepared for lectures, television, travel, whatever comes. Whatever falls into your path, do it." That was all he said. I felt a terrific shock. I was not prepared for anything like that. I waited for a few days, then went back to him and said, "Paramahamsaji, will you come to Greece?" He replied, "No, I will never come to Greece."

During the rest of my stay at BSY he gave me some advice that has helped me many times through the years. He said, "Everything that happens to you, will happen for your good. There will be nothing negative; everything will be positive."

A small way

So the day came when I had to leave India for Greece. I did not speak Greek. Upon arriving in Greece I went to the southern region of the Peloponnese. Paramahamsaji had said to start in a small way. "A small way" turned out to be a small town: Kalamata. That was where Satyananda Yoga started in Greece, and I spent some time there.

Do not stay in one place

Paramahamsaji had said to me, "Do not stay in one place. If the need is elsewhere, be prepared to go elsewhere." Within a very short span of time this began to happen. Yoga was little known in Greece in 1978, so I began to travel to other places. People in Athens heard that yoga was being taught at Kalamata and I was invited to Athens. Greece's capital is a large, cosmopolitan city and many

people there expressed interest in yoga. Eventually, quite a large number started to group together in an apartment in Kypseli near the centre of Athens.

Of course I am coming to Greece

About eighteen months after I began teaching yoga in Greece, I heard that Paramahamsaji was going to Spain. I decided to go and see him there, as I was longing to see him again, and that last 'no' was still very strong in my mind. So I mustered up the courage to ask the question for a second time. I asked him, "Paramahamsaji, will you come to Greece?" He looked at me as though he had never said he would not come to Greece, and smiled, and said, "Of course I am coming to Greece. Get it organized for me. I will be there in a few months' time." And so his first visit to Greece took place a short time later, in January 1978.



Tributes to Swami Satyananda

Conqueror of hearts

Swami Aparokshananda

President, Satyanandashram Hellas

*I'm silently walking in your footprints
I do not seek, I do not wait, I do not expect.
I exist because You exist.*

*Eternity of the soul and the blending of existence,
is what unites us.*

*Body and mind are their reflection, when mirrored
in the glowing light of pure consciousness.*

*Would I ever let this body and this mind set us apart?
Now, I'm walking as a fellow traveller.*

When you start to write about Paramahamsaji, you have so much to say. Any contact with him, instils in you drops of eternity, waves of existence, galaxies of stars, traditions of ages, in a state where time and space disappear.

Paramahamsaji was a conqueror of hearts. Uplifting the mood to joy; tearing apart the disguise of seriousness and life's lila. His contact penetrating all levels of one's existence. In such a way, and in many other ways, he could lead you, open you and correct you.

I'm sitting in silence, in front of your glowing light, and pictures pass before my closed eyes. When Paramahamsaji came to Greece in 1984, I found myself driving an open jeep, with Paramahamsaji sitting next to me. Although the pre-arranged protocol was for him to be seated in the



back of the car on the right side, he changed everything in a split second.

From the time we got into the car up until the time we reached our destination, he analyzed in great detail what was wrong with the pistons and valves, the plugs, the ignition, the petrol consumption, the distributor and everything that contributes to the proper functioning of a car. While he was talking, he was comparing all of this outer description of the car to the inner condition of my body. Indeed, at that time I had problems with my digestive system and some other health issues and, while analyzing the mechanics of the car in a seemingly light-hearted conversation for the entertainment of the group present, I understood that he was analyzing me, and at that time adjusting the functioning of my whole physical system. It was a subtle and inconceivable way of 'repairing', which he applied. We crawled through the Athenian traffic, approaching the centre of Athens,

finally reaching gridlocked Syntagma Square, when we were approximately three hundred metres away from his hotel. He suddenly flung the door wide open, and flew on to the road, darting and weaving through the traffic with the delicate footsteps of a fox and the profile of a panther, all the while his head tilted back towards us offering a beautiful smile of innocence, purity and playfulness, leaving us all dumbstruck. Again, playing with the projection of our rigidly inflexible presumptions, rules and procedures. He offered the beauty and spark of the unexpected, the uncommon, the unforeseen, which mysteriously was also always the most practical solution!

Beloved Guru

Sannyasis Vedamurti and Durga Shakti, (married at Sita Kalyanam 1998 as Sita and Ram in the presence of Swami Satyananda)

We got to know Paramahamsaji in 1989 through his books, the ashram in Greece, and Swami Sivamurti's talks that were full of love and devotion for him. We would listen in silence and bow our heads in respect and heartfelt gratitude, wishing to meet him someday and touch his lotus feet.

In 1998, he entered our life unexpectedly, when he blessed our wedding, as Sita and Rama, in Rikhia during Sita Kalyanam, and since then he has been living in our hearts. The days there in his physical presence filled us with happiness and love. His personal care and interest in every detail regarding the preparations, made Rikhia feel like our home, the residents our family, and him a caring hospitable father, looking after his children and meeting their every real need in a unique way.

"What is your profession?" he asked Sita-to-be. "Interior decorator," I said. He replied by indicating his heart with his hand. "And what do you do?" he asked

Rama-to-be. “Ah, Marine Engineering!” and with his special, expressive smile Paramahamsaji said, “I saw the movie Titanic!” What a significant comment!

Since then our life was not only merely ‘shipwrecked’ but totally changed; it became meaningful and acquired a purpose which was infused by him, giving it an upward direction.

Every day of that period was full of surprises for both the mind and the emotions. All worries and difficulties of our unquiet minds, were dispersed by his very presence, provided you were able to see through each of his magic movements, looks or expressions to ‘serve, love and give’. The number of people arriving increased daily, as well as the requirements for prasad. When, at some point, the person in charge of the kitchen informed him that the prasad was diminishing and would not be enough for all the people, he told him to continue giving and in the end, everybody received prasad!

He was softer than a blossom when it came to love and compassion and more powerful than thunder in matters



of principle and belief. He taught us the essence of real life in a unique manner. His tireless activity and energy inspired everyone, while different things were happening simultaneously with precision.

In a unique way, Paramahamsaji spoke the absolute truth, satyam, with which he was identified and which he expressed in a natural way. In everyday subjects, he was practical and creative, but his physical presence and touching his feet created a deep commotion inside of us. Every contact with him uplifted us spiritually and channelled our worldly desires in a harmonious way.

Over the years, as we went to Rikhia every year, we became more and more connected with him. It often

crossed our minds that this magnificent and admirable man could just as easily have been an emperor capable of conquering the world, if he had chosen to concentrate his energy in the pursuit of worldly success. Instead, he chose to conquer the inner towers of egoism, which when torn down, enable the individual to be elevated towards the Divine.

Through yoga he conquered the hearts of the people, by following the instructions of his guru, and year-by-year, we felt that Paramahamsaji spread a certain spirit and attitude towards life in the world. It is not only the personality of Swami Satyananda, the man and yogi, but just as much the Satyananda spirit that is our heritage in life.



We live with that spirit enveloping us, manifest with sanctity, a lot of love, service and care towards fellow human being, as he taught and is continuing to teach, by taking care of the needs of all. A simple almost Spartan phrase, “Go on”, was enough to change the whole direction of our life, filling us with optimism and confidence to extinguish every sign of hesitation and to establish our faith so we could build our lives’ ship and steer it to the safe port of Satyam. Beloved guru, sannyasi, yogi, man and father allow all our actions to be worship to you.

The Mystic

Rev. Antoinette Schoenmaker, Meritus

The Independent Church of Australia

With a warm heart and gratitude, I think of Paramahansa Satyananda. It brings a smile to my face to think of him, to see his dancing eyes, and the utter joy he embodied.

I was fortunate to meet him twice, thanks to Swami Sivamurti. She was a good friend of my father, Reverend Mario Schoenmaker (the founder of our church and a western spiritual teacher). She hoped that one day her guru and my father would meet (for they had the same spirit). She wished, I think, to see the coming together of two spiritual traditions very dear to her, and she saw that this could happen by inviting Rev Mario to celebrate a Cosmic Mass at the Sita Kalyanam festival in Rikhia. However, before this dream could be realized, my father died, so Swami Sivamurti invited me to come instead. So it was in this context that I met Paramahamsaji.

I shall never forget the very first time I walked into the spiritual gathering at the Akhara of Paramahansa Satyananda. He had extended a very warm welcome to us and arranged everything for our comfort. We arrived on the Thursday evening and were taken straight to accommodation which he had organized. The Akhara was approximately thirty minutes away driving. In the morning, we were driven to the Akhara, met at the gate and ushered through approximately five hundred people who had gathered there for the English satsang.

We expected to sit down the back and use the next two days to quietly get our bearings and prepare for the Mass. Not to be! Instead we were ushered straight to the front, introduced to Paramahamsaji and Swami Niranjan and given seats by his side. These were to be our places for the remainder of the week. We had a very public profile and were glad that we had given some thought as to what we would wear!

I felt very moved to be welcomed in this way. Apparently, for days prior to our arrival, Paramahamsaji had spoken about the Mass and the significance of it and how much he valued what was about to occur. He insisted that every person attend the Mass. Even their duties (their karma yoga) were not to interfere. Duties would be suspended for the time of the Mass. It was a very important event. He continued to emphasize this every day after the Mass also.

To me this welcome was incredible. He did not know me, didn't know anything about our centre or our Mass, but his trust in us was complete. He honoured us in every way: speaking with us often, shaking our hands, sitting us next to him, when long-time devotees may never even have had the chance to look into his eyes. It was an incredible experience for me and, as I walked through the crowds on that first morning, I felt tears of joy welling up within me.

When he asked me to then address the people, the only thing I could think of to say was not words, but a song. I sang:

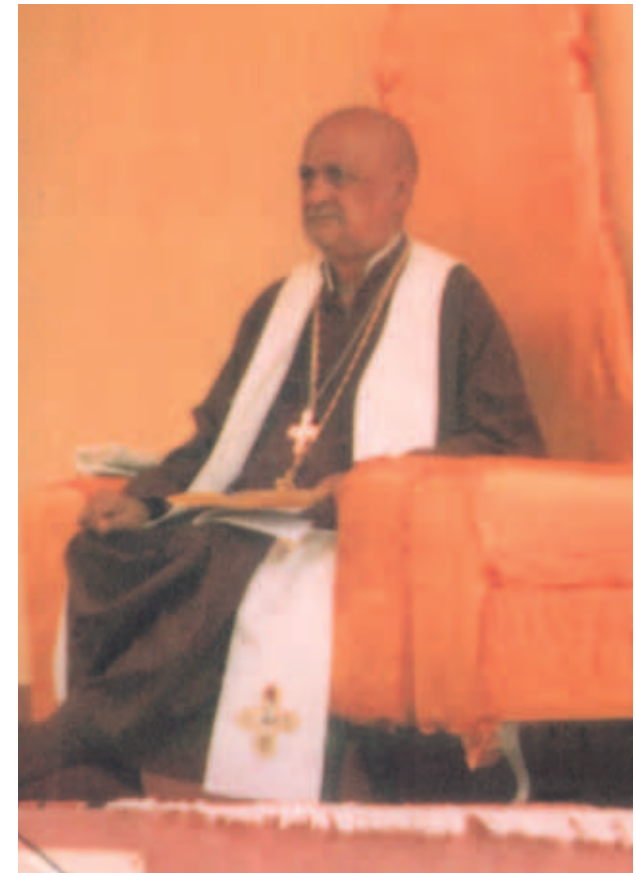
"O love that knoweth of no fear, O love that sheds a joyous tear, O love that makes me whole and free, Such love shall keep and hallow me."

Because that was how I felt, this was what I was experiencing. This touched many people and forged a link between us immediately. Swami Satyananda later said to

me, "Tears come when the soul cannot contain itself." And this felt totally true. I was alive beyond my skin.

I found him exceptional. Beautiful. Wise. Cutting. Compassionate. Truthful. A Mystic. Being with him was exactly like being with my own spiritual teacher, my father. Many times I felt tears of recognition rising within me as Paramahamsaji would say something that Rev. Mario had said or would have said. It showed to me that the Spirit of Christ is at work all over the world, that our Brotherhood is at work all over the world, using different languages and different words, different methods and expressions, but the same spirit. I had only recently lost my teacher, my father, and so to find another whose spirit was the same was an immense comfort to me. That visit was also so spirit-filled, so grace-filled. Nothing went wrong. We were being 'looked after'. The minute we thought, "I'd like this or that," it would happen! Even though Paramahamsaji said, "Grace means not only good things happen", in our case only good things did happen! When I left I felt very blessed, strengthened, encouraged and inspired to continue my spiritual work.

I see Paramahamsa Satyananda as a spiritual father, begetting life in so many. His influence has reached all around the world and touched many in forgotten corners: bringing light, bringing a new way to live, a new way to think, and a sense that we can all be greater than we are now and that we can all give more than we give now, a person swift and orderly of mind, with a great and generous heart, and a very large vision. His welcome of me during my visits to Rikhia displayed all these things and more. His ability to go beyond the borders of culture, upbringing, words, symbols, to penetrate to the very spirit, the essence. What sharpness! What softness! And what a life of sacrifice he has lived in order to create a



great fellowship, a brotherhood, a spiritual family which seeks to find the means to uplift many souls in the many different ways they need this: in the villages, in the cities, all over the world. I thank God that this warm, joyous, generous, intelligent spirit of his lives in his swamis. He is the guru and he embodied the flame of love, wisdom and sacrifice, and he has lit this flame in the hearts of many. We most certainly need such a spirit in this world. I thank God that I was able to meet the Paramahamsaji and I bless him and his legacy.



1978

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Day-by-Day Itinerary

- Swami Satyananda arrived in Greece from Colombia for a four-day lecture tour. He visited Athens, and Kalamata in the south of Greece, accompanied by Swami Amritananda from India.

Tuesday 17 January

- Opening of Satyanandashram in Kypseli and a satsang on mantra diksha. A number of people received mantra diksha.
- A press interview with Swami Satyananda. The article was called, "The beautiful guru who came to Greece."

- Swami Satyananda delivered his opening public lecture at the Royal Olympic Hotel, Athens. There were over one thousand people as well as some devotees from Spain. He spoke about yoga in the modern era.

Wednesday 18 January

- TV interview with Swami Satyananda by Elli Evangelidou on a popular TV chat-show (Channel YENED).
- Satsang at the home of devotees (Mr Vasilios and Mrs Lillian Papathanassopoulou), in Athens. Swami Satyananda spoke on evolution, death, and samadhi. There were fifty guests present.
- After Swami Satyananda's opening lecture in Athens, his next lecture, on meditation and the mind, was enthusiastically received at Royal Olympic Hotel, Athens. There were over one thousand people present.

Thursday 19 January

- Swami Satyananda spoke on the "Introduction to the science of yoga" at the Chamber of Commerce, "Epimeliterio," in Kalamata.
- Satsang at Kalamata yoga centre, thirty people were present

Friday 20 January

- Satsang with Swami Satyananda at a devotee's home in Kalamata. During the satsang, he was asked about Greek philosophy and history, and how he could really be any type of authority to speak on the subject. To this he replied, "Firstly, I don't have to praise Greece because this is the land of my ancestors. I belonged to this country in one of my incarnations. If you have any doubt, ask the clairvoyants of this country, they will say, 'Swami Satyananda was in Greece in one of his incarnations.'"
- Swami Satyananda delivered a lecture, "Meditation and taming the mind" at a devotee's home.



Opening of Satyananda Yoga Centre Athens,
Drosopoulou Street, Kypseli

From the Media

TV presenter's introduction to Swami Satyananda on a TV chat-show

Paramahansa Satyananda is the founder of the International Yoga Fellowship Movement, with more than five hundred branches all over the world. He is one of the greatest masters and exponents of the yogic sciences in the world. Born at the foot of the Himalayas in India, from his early childhood he felt an inner light moving him towards a higher dimension in search of perfection.

Swami Satyananda is a man of subtle dynamism, a living example of yoga, and a great guru (master) capable of leading and raising his disciples, and all who go to him, with faith and sincerity, to the highest goal of yoga.

His yoga ashram is situated on the banks of the Ganges, and is well known today for the high standard and authentic training of its teachers, who have gone out all over the world in order to integrate the yogic way into daily life, thus helping to develop, balance, and harmonize all aspects of one's being.



TV interview with Elli Evangelidou on Channel YENED, 18 January 1978

Article in "Eleytherotypia" (Athenian newspaper), 14 January 1978

A master of yoga teaches how to get to know ourselves

"We know much, we accumulate knowledge, but we ignore our Self. Yoga offers us the tools to know our Self and, simultaneously, attain perfection and serenity."

These are the words of Paramahansa Satyananda, who visits Greece and shall give four lectures regarding yoga. Two in Athens, Tuesday and Wednesday the 17th and 18th of January at the Royal Olympic Hotel and two lectures in Kalamata at the Industrial and Commercial Hall, the 19th and 20th of January. The entrance is free and the lectures will be given in English with Greek translation.

Paramahansa Satyananda is one of the most eminent personalities of the yoga tradition. He is a sensitive master, an inspiring speaker with international radiance.

He was born in India and spent twelve years under the guidance of Swami Sivananda. Then he wandered around the Indian peninsula teaching and learning. He lived for three years in contemplation, and in full isolation and, finally, he founded the Bihar School of Yoga, in Munger, India. He established the great Yoga Fellowship Movement which is spread around the world with five hundred centres. In Athens the school is based in Kypseli, I. Drosopoulou 37, 2nd Floor.

His advice:

Come to yoga. You all have something to offer, much more to learn, and even more to earn.

Ένας μαίτρ της γιόγκα μᾶς... γνωρίζει τον εαυτό μας

«Γνωρίζουμε πολλά, συσσωρεύουμε γνώσεις, αλλά αγνοούμε τον εαυτό μας. Ἡ Γιόγκα προσφέρει τὴν γνωριμία μετὰ τὸν εαυτό μας καὶ —ταυτόχρονα— τὴν τελειότητα καὶ τὴ γαλήνη».

Αὐτὰ εἶναι νὰ πεῖ ὁ Σατυανάντα Παραμχάνσα, ποὺ ἦρθε στὴ χώρα μᾶς γιὰ νὰ δώσει τέσσερις διαλέξεις σχετικές μετὰ τὴ Γιόγκα: Δύο στὴν Ἀθήνα, τὴν Τρίτη καὶ Τετάρτη (17 καὶ 18 Ἰανουαρίου), στὸ ξενοδοχεῖο Ρουαγιάλ Ὀλυμπικ (στὸ λοιπὸ Ὀλυμπιὸν Διὸς, Διάκου 28), στίς 8.30 μ.μ. καὶ δύο τὴν Πέμπτη καὶ Παρασκευή στὴν Καλαμάτα, στὴν αἴθουσα τοῦ ἐκεῖ Ἐμπορικοῦ — Βιομηχανικοῦ Ἐπιμελητηρίου. Οἱ διαλέξεις, μετὰ εἰσοδὸ ἐλευθερὴν, θὰ δοθοῦν στὴν ἀγγλικὴ γλῶσσα καὶ θὰ μεταφράζονται στὴν ἐλληνικὴ.

Ἀπὸ τὶς ἐξοχότερες προσωπικότητες τῆς Γιόγκα, εὐαίσθητος δάσκαλος καὶ ἐμπνευσμένος ομιλητὴς μετὰ διεθνή ἀκτινοβολία, ὁ Παραμχάνσα Σουάμι Σατυανάντα γεννήθηκε στὴν Ἰνδία, μαθήτευσε δώδεκα χρόνια κοντὰ στὸν Σουάμι Σουαντάντα, περιπλανήθηκε στὴν ἰνδικὴ χερσόνησο διδάσκοντας καὶ διδασκόμενος, ἐξήσε

μιά τριετία περισυλλογῆς σὲ ἀπόλυτὴ ἀπομόνωση καὶ τελικὰ ἱδρύσε στὸ Μονγκὺρ Μπιχάρ τῆς Ἰνδίας τὴν Μπιχάρ Σκούλ ὀφ Γιόγκα. Ἀπὸ τὴ Σχολὴ ἐκείνη ξεκίνησε ἡ μεγάλη Ἀδελφότητα — ἡ Φέλλουσιπ Γιόγκα — ποὺ μ' ἐμπνευστὴ τὸν Σατυανάντα δικτυώθηκε σὲ 500 Κέντρα - Σχολές σ' ὅλο τὸν κόσμον (στὴν Ἀθήνα ἡ Σχολὴ στεγάζεται στὴν Κυψέλη, I. Δροσοπούλου 37, 2 ὄροφος).

Ὁ Σατυανάντα Παραμχάνσα μετὰ τὴ διεθνή κίνησιν του, ἀποδέλπει εἰσὸς νὰ κάνει προσιτὲς τὶς κατακτήσεις τῆς Γιόγκα στὸν μέσον ἄνθρωπον. Καὶ συμβουλεύει:

— Ἐλάτε στὴ Γιόγκα! Ἐχετε κάτι περισσότερο νὰ προσφέρετε, κάτι περισσότερο νὰ μάθετε καὶ πολὺ λά περισσότερο νὰ κερδίσετε.



Swami Satyananda giving an interview to a newspaper journalist



Opening Lecture on Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Hari Om Tat Sat to everybody and greetings from India. Well, we are old friends, and we have cherished this friendship through a long passage of history also. More than three thousand years ago, history was the witness that Greece and Bihar, where I come from, had close diplomatic and other associations. That I come from India you can very well understand, but also I come from that province in India where the government of Greece had very close connections. The daughter of the General Commander Seleucus, Helena, was married to Chandra Gupta in Bihar some three thousand years ago. So I come from your daughter's home, and that is also the home of the modern yogic culture.

The scientific concept of yoga took its roots from Bihar. If you care to look at the map of India, you'll find on the extreme east lies Calcutta, Bihar; north of that, Nepal, Kathmandu. That is the place which is the home of the modern scientific yoga. Yoga is an ancient science, a universal science designed to give a healthy body and a healthy mind to every man. The great thinkers were very much concerned about the welfare of man, and this concern led to the discovery of a procedure which is now known as the great science of yoga, which has immense potentialities for human welfare.

It should be understood by everyone that yoga is not an oriental culture, but it is a universal culture. With the advancement of civilization, as the tensions grow, man will be under stress and strain and he will need a new approach



Discourse at the Royal Olympic Hotel, Athens, 17 January 1978

to treatment. This is precisely the reason why modern medical science is now facing a challenge, and is not able to ameliorate the sufferings of mankind in general.

Yoga as therapy

The arena of human suffering has changed. For instance, there was a time when asthma could be due to congestion in the lungs due to bronchial pneumonia and its treatment by medicines like cortisone and adrenaline could help the patient. Today cortisone has failed, adrenaline has also failed. Why? Because the arena of disease has changed. Today, asthma is not due to complications in the lungs; it is due to complications in the emotional personality of man. The same thing can be said about asthenia, angina pectoris

and blood pressure. More than ninety per cent of diseases today originate from the mind. If the diseases originate from the mind, is it scientific to treat them by medicines? If the diseases originate from the mind and emotions should we not discover a new way of therapy? This is precisely the reason that yoga has captured mankind like wildfire.

The western culture need not exist with yoga; the western culture has to accept yoga. There should be no difficulty. Many people wonder how the man in the West is going to adjust to the philosophy of the East. My reply is very simple; in the same way as the West has accepted the religion from the East. After all, Christianity is not a western religion; it has come from the Orient, but being a great thought, being



Discourse at the Royal Olympic Hotel, Athens, 17 January 1978

a great revelation, it has redeemed the whole of the West. In the same way, the yoga system will be accepted by the western people more and more. We are now thinking that yoga could be possibly used as a new method of therapy.

Meditation

There is a scientific basis behind my statement. When I talk about yoga therapy, I do not mean the way we treat a patient in a hospital. For me, yoga therapy does not mean hatha yoga or just a few asanas; even meditation can be used as a potential method of self-treatment. Meditation is one of the most important aspects of yoga. In meditation, when you withdraw your mind and when you still your body, at that time absolute, revolutionary change is taking place within yourself.

One thing that has been seen is that in the depths of meditation, alpha activity becomes intensified. The brain

has electrical impulses: alpha, delta, beta, theta, they are the waves in the brain. These waves operate in different cycles per second. They have a certain voltage. The alpha intensity in the brain indicates tranquillity of the mind. When the EEG, electro-encephalogram, indicates intensity of alpha waves in the brain, it means the pressure in the heart is reduced.

Well, I'm not going to teach you science here, I'm just giving you an indication. Now, if you meditate and your alpha waves are intensified, you are going to control your coronary diseases and you can check your high blood pressure. At the same time, as you are meditating, the metabolism of the body is completely revolutionized. Scientists in Europe, Poland, America and India are observing the changes that take place during the practice of meditation.

Asanas

Apart from meditation, if you take the subject of asana and pranayama, it will take you years to understand how the practices of asana and pranayama can restructure the body. Asanas are certain physical postures, and there are as many as eighty-four thousand. We teach you a maximum of eighty-four, but you only need to practise two, or three, or four. For instance, if one has sciatica or slipped disc, one can practise only three asanas which will take a maximum of five minutes.

Pranayama

Pranayama is the breathing system. Prana means life force; pranayama means to make the life force expand. It is a process of breathing in and controlling the breath, and breathing out. I must, in all frankness, tell you that we should never pass over the practice of asana and pranayama. They are most important and basic yoga practices for everybody.

In this physical body there are two great forces: one is called the life force, the other is called the mental force. The life force and the mental force is what I am and you are. If there is any imbalance between these two forces in the body it can cause a physical disease or a mental disease and can take you to the mental hospital. It can also create cancer. Therefore, in yoga we say that balance, harmony, a concord and accord must be effected between the life force and the mental force. If there is an excess of life force and less of mental force a man becomes a terrorist, he becomes a criminal. If there is more of mental force and less of life force, he becomes crazy and goes to the mental hospital.

These two forces in yoga are known as ida and pingala. I call them life and mind, and they are also known as the moon and the sun. In old symbology you may have seen two serpents crossing each other at five or more points and joining somewhere at the top. This is the symbology of the two forces coming into accord with each other. Now, how to create harmony and balance between these two great forces in our personality?

An integrated approach

There are two systems: one is called hatha yoga, the other raja yoga. Hatha yoga is concerned with the body, the nervous system, the glands and the brain. Raja yoga is concerned with the subconscious mind, the psychic body, the unseen mind, the subliminal personality, the 'id' of Freud. The unseen mind that comes in dreams, the unseen mind that comes in meditation, that is the mind which one has to realize. A simple way is to concentrate the mind and transcend time and space, name and form. This is meditation and this is raja yoga.

With the combination of hatha yoga and raja yoga we can find an absolute structure of yoga therapy. With the changing pattern of society, with the stresses and strains

that we are facing today, the meaning of disease has changed, the causes have changed, the whole ideology has changed, and scientists will have to recast their definitions, and not only their definitions, they will have to find a new approach to therapy. Then yoga will have a place in man's physical and mental welfare.

Questions and Answers

Q. What brings you to Greece?

Paramahamsaji: First, I don't have to praise Greece because this is the land of my ancestors. I belonged to this country in one of my incarnations. If you have any doubt, ask the clairvoyants of this country, they will say "Swami Satyananda was in Greece in one of his incarnations".

Q. What is meditation?

Paramahamsaji: It is a process of losing and gaining. It is a process of becoming great. When you stick to name and form, when you stick to limitations, you are microcosmic. When you lose name and form and become one with the one, you become macrocosmic. Meditation is a process in which the little individual, the little ego, becomes one with the cosmic ego.

Q. Through philosophy and through religion we have been taught that we can unite with the cosmic one, with the logos which is mentioned in the Bible, through good deeds and not through meditation. Can you please explain this point?

Paramahamsaji: It has never been said that through yoga we don't ascend, though it is true that one can



Discourse at the Royal Olympic Hotel, Athens, 17 January 1978

ascend through good deeds. In the Bible, what is that ladder that goes to heaven? What does it mean, "By God I swear I die every night"? What is that heaven that a man ascends to? What is the light of St. Gabriel? Meditation in the Bible is as important as it is in yoga, but good life, good actions are equally important. That is why in raja yoga they have truth, non-violence, celibacy and so many good deeds—yama and niyama.

The very first words of the Bible say, "In the beginning there was the word, and the word was with God". This is the subject matter of nada yoga, of sant-mat. So with all humility I would say that in my opinion the Bible teaches a complete life. It doesn't teach exclusion. On one side

it teaches us to transcend and go to heaven and be with God, at the same time service of humanity, compassion, benevolence are also given a due place.

Q. I would like to ask about the antar mouna practice.

Paramahamsaji: This is a very small question but a very powerful one. When you try to concentrate, what happens? The mind begins to jump. The more you try to concentrate the more the mind will jump. If you try to control the mind it will put you out. Therefore in yoga they say you practise your mantra and if the thoughts come in your mind, let them come. If you are practising a mantra, if you are concentrating on a symbol or the

breath, go on, and if your mind is wandering, let it wander. Don't control the mind. Good thoughts, all right; evil thoughts, all right; divine thoughts, all right: no confrontation with the mind.

This is called antar mouna, inner silence. This is a trick to play with the mind, because the law of the mind is that the more you control it, the more it runs out, but if you leave the mind it comes back. So when practising concentration or when you are repeating your mantra or reciting your prayers, do not tighten your mind. Recite the mantra, say it loudly. Say your prayers, recite them loudly, and with a little bit of attention, try to find out what is happening in your mind.

This is called antar mouna; antar means "interior", mouna means silence. So, esoteric silence is antar mouna. It means you have to silence the mind. You do not fight with the mind, because the mind which is trying to control the mind is the same mind which is wandering. If you try to hold a confrontation with the mind you are creating a split and this can later develop into schizophrenia. Mind is our friend but we must know how to make use of it. Mind is not our enemy, why should we fight it? Therefore, when I practise my mantra and all kinds of thoughts come, I allow them, I permit them. This is antar mouna.

Q. From the contact I have with Hindus abroad, I have noticed that they have great calmness and goodness. Also the early Christians, from what we read, had great love and peace in them, but seem to have lost much of it. In the guru's opinion, what do they have in common?

Paramahamsaji: I think everybody knows it, but let me say it, "One does not live by bread alone". The swamis in

India perform austerities for ten or twelve years. They live the life of a Christian, self-imposed poverty, absolute obedience to a guru and chastity. They don't eat meat they don't drink, they don't take fat or oil. They live in seclusion, practise yoga and control their thoughts. They don't associate with politics, they practise renunciation. That is why they have brilliance of spirit.

In the olden days St Francis of Assisi, St Andreas, St Paul, St Domingo and so many others, you know how they were living. They were not living in the great monasteries, they were only living in small huts. You know the name of the man in Athens who used to live in the wine drum? They threw his drum away but somebody bought another one for him. People thought he was crazy, but he was great. How did Socrates live? Did he live in a monastery? He used to have quarrels with his wife every day. Likewise these saints suffered. They suffered physically. They suffered for others and they purified their body by fasting, penance. That is why these old saints in Christianity were beaming with brilliance. But please remember that saints are never Hindu and never Christian, they are never registered. I was born in a Hindu family but I am not a Hindu, if I had been born in a Christian family I would not be a Christian today. I am no Hindu, I am no Muslim, no Arab, no Christian, no man, no woman—I am Self, Self, Self.

Q. What are the mantras and how do they act?

Paramahamsaji: Mantra is a psychic word. It is a revelation to a yogi in the depths of meditation. These mantras, when they are recited, influence the cosmic mind and the unconscious. Everybody has a mantra of their own but we do not know it; the guru tells us which mantra we should repeat. The mantra is a vehicle for spiritual transcendence.

Q. Can you explain to us what is "Self"?

Paramahamsaji: Self is what I am, the basis of my existence, the background of my awareness and the fact of my continuity. Self is the one thing that continues behind all the changes. The body is changing, the mind is changing, experiences are changing, concepts, values and philosophy are changing, but I am the same as I was thirty or forty years ago. That is all, just the external manifestation of the spirit.

Now, this spirit has to be realised in samadhi. You should be able to arrive at a point where you don't experience name and form. You should come to a point of awareness where you are not aware of name and you are not aware of form. At that time the spiritual experience takes place. No matter how much you discuss the Self, you will not know it. Self can only be known by experience and this knowledge must take place only in samadhi.

Q. Trying to follow a system strengthens the ego. Is this not an impediment to becoming aware of the Self?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, yes. First you strengthen the ego, then you transcend it. Just as when you have a thorn in your foot, you use another thorn to take it out and then throw both away. You see, the isolation of mind has to take place. Just as in a physical body, say with cancer, you first isolate the problem in one area. In the same manner, isolation of mind has to take place at one point, otherwise the mind will all be dissipated here and there and everywhere. The mental force has to be consolidated and integrated or centralized at one point; then transcendence is possible.

—Discourse and satsang at Royal Olympic Hotel,
Athens, 17 January 1978

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. Could we say that a philosopher is one who is inventing the truth while a yogi speaks truth?

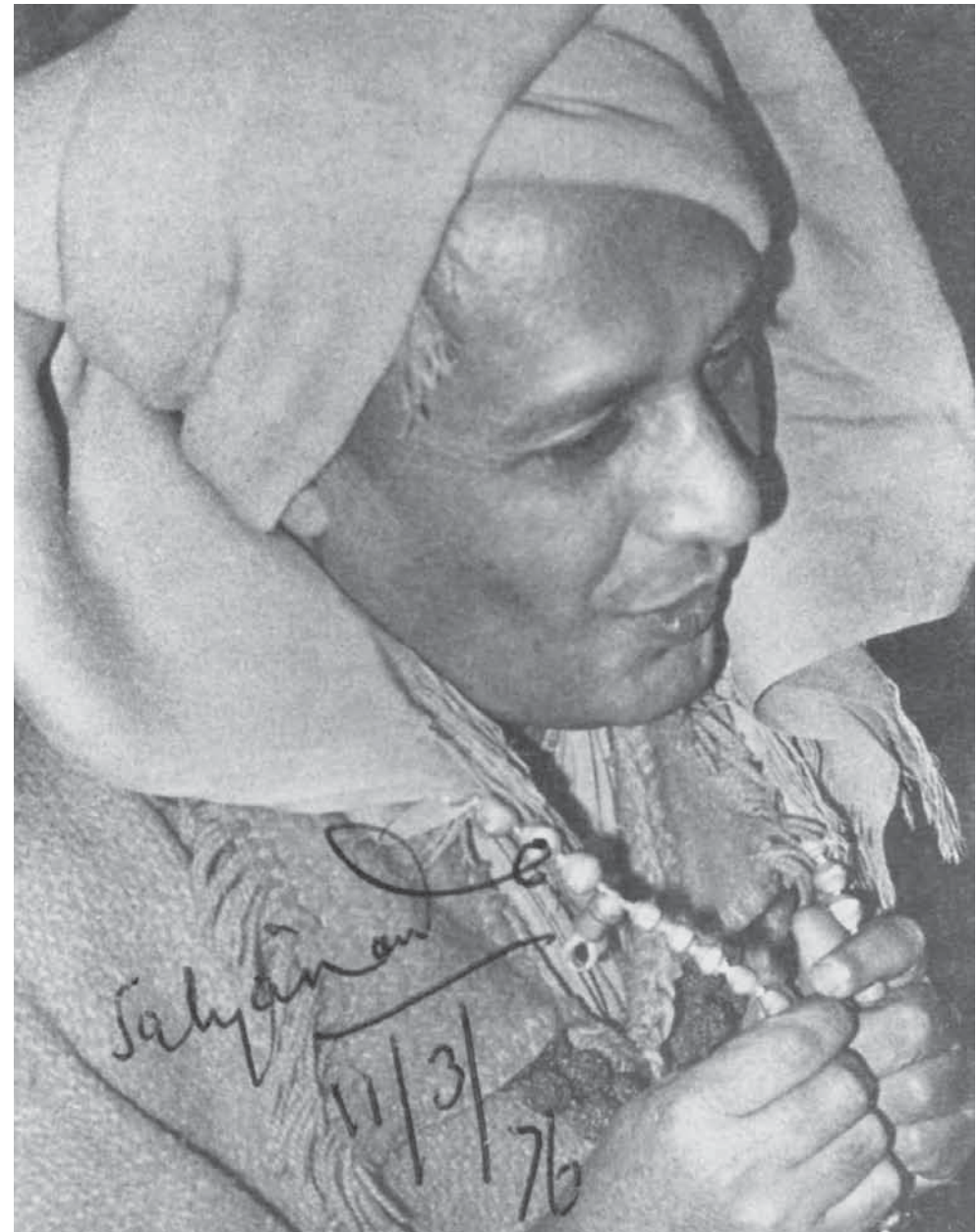
Paramahamsaji: Socrates was not a philosopher, he was a knower of the truth, whereas Plato was a political philosopher and Marcus Aurelius was a yogi, but he had a philosophy. I also have a philosophy but I am not a philosopher. The yogi is experiencing the truth and the philosopher is trying to explain the order of the realization of truth. Just like a politician plays politics but he doesn't know anything, while a political philosopher gives an explanation, an interpretation of the system of philosophy, he organizes it and has an epistemology.

The word yoga means union. When we use the word yoga we always mean a path that brings you nearer to your spirit. So when we say jnana yoga we mean the way of union through the path of enquiry. Raja yoga means the way of union by the process of esoteric realization; bhakti yoga, a path of union through devotion. Similarly, karma yoga, kundalini yoga, tantra and mantra yoga are the different paths by which one arrives at the point; just like in a circle we travel through radii to the point.

Q. Do you think that God is a person or the real source from which everything comes? Does God have any existence or is it a matter of experience or is it something different which is beyond our experience, our mind?

Paramahamsaji: God is beyond mind, beyond experience, but it is an experience. I'm not talking from the books. For me, the entire existence, the whole creation that is seen and that is not seen, emanates from a divine principle. Organic, inorganic, living or dead, sentient or insentient, there is no point in the universe, as far as I know, which is devoid of this divine principle. Man is very fortunate because he is able to think about God, whereas other objects in this world are permeated through and through by a divine principle, but they are not aware of it. Man has become aware of it and he has been working on this adventure right from the beginning of human civilization.

Now we have come to the conclusion that there is a divine experience far beyond the sensual experience, very different from the mental experience of pain



and pleasure, from the emotional experience of love and hate, or from the sleep experience, because the divine experience does not depend on any sense of the mind. It is an independent experience. When we transcend the mind and the body, then the divine experience comes to realization.

This divine experience which I have is personal. I have that divine experience, you don't have it, others don't have it. When I have that divine experience, I no longer remain an experience, that's the point. When the salt merges with the water it becomes water. In the same way, when the experiencer experiences non-empirical, divine experience, he no longer exists. The knower of Brahman, the knower of God, becomes God, loses his individuality, loses his limitations. That is the divine experience which is a personal experience.

For me, that is God because that is the only final thing that I can apprehend. For me, I am only talking about myself; it is not possible to apprehend God in any human form although I know that He is in everyone. He is immanent; He is transcendent. He is immanent in everything, He is beyond also. At the same time I think it is good to have respect, devotion, submission and surrender to any human being in the form of a guru, saviour, emancipator or spiritual guide. However, if you ask me what is the real form of God at the point of realization, some say light, some say knowledge, but I think the best word is experience. Experience of what? Experience of totality, experience of oneness, one without a second.

It is so difficult, that experience cannot be interpreted here. You follow the point? If you have eaten sugar and I have never eaten it, you are not going to explain it to me even if you write a big thesis on it. In the same manner, if I have experienced God, and you have not experienced it, I can never explain and you can never understand.

Q. Did you say the universe was devoid or divine?

Paramahansaji: No point in creation if it is devoid of reality. You see, we will all have to think about all these matters right from the beginning now. Everyone who is a seeker has to rethink everything afresh, from the start, because most of our minds are clouded by so many philosophies. Some say one thing and others say the other thing, and we don't know what to believe. If I believe in one, I disbelieve in another, but maybe that is right and I am wrong, so we have to start right from the beginning. Where do we start? We can't just say, "God is an experience." That is a





fatal idea. What I said just now helps nobody because that is an experience in samadhi. It can only give you inspiration. It can give you a kind of revelation, but it can't bring experience to you.

If you want experience, first of all the instruments of experience must be purified. Unless your mirror is clean and clear, can you ever see your face? Unless the intuition is developed, you can never see God. Intuition, the inner eye that develops through meditation; you have to develop the inner eye because now you are blind. You have physical eyes through which you see forms, but you have no inner eyes, therefore you don't see something beyond those forms. How to develop the inner eye is the first thing that you have to settle. Before you are going to settle the nature of God, his characteristics, attributes, glory, etc., you must first settle the point of intuition. How are you going to open your inner eye?

Q. Are you afraid of death or physical pain?

Paramahamsaji: Death is only a transition; I have seen it as a transition. When I leave this house I go to a better house or a smaller house, whichever I like.

Q. Isn't that a personal belief however?

Paramahamsaji: It is not a personal belief. It is knowledge.

Q. A personal knowledge, let's say?

Paramahamsaji: Yes.

Q. You have died; in samadhi you have died?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, if you discuss evolution, what does it mean? Evolution is a constant motion, a very, very slow motion, one motion mingling into another. It is not a change. The physical body has been evolving right from childhood. It has been evolving in such a way that we don't see it. We always think of evolution in terms of transformation, transition, metamorphosis. So in evolution, there is no death. If you take death to be destruction, then the very philosophy or theory of evolution is false; you have to accept there is no evolution, finish it off. But evolution is there, you can't finish it off. Nature is evolving, mind and emotion are evolving, everything seems to be in motion; therefore, death is just an exit. It is a point where evolution enters another phase.

Q. But physical pain, not just decay or death, there is illness involved sometimes before death?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, I understand.

Q. How can we put up with it?

Paramahamsaji: It is possible that by controlling the mind you can transcend physical pain, and you can always witness it. I'll give you an example. If a thorn pricks you, you get terrible pain. The same thorn pricks him but he doesn't get the same intensity, he gets less than you. The same thorn pricks somebody else, he just takes it out and throws it away, hst! That's all the pain he gets. Then there's a person who panics for days when a thorn pricks him. So the experience, the intensity, the response to pain is relative, depending on human sensitivity. Some people feel more and some feel less. I think that my sensitivity to pain and pleasure has been too low in voltage. I have not responded extremely either to pain or pleasure. Now it is very slow, I just know it, but I feel it's natural, just natural. Not that I tried to achieve it, but I think gradually it has become like that. If I fall down somewhere on the steps I just go back to my room. There is no use in thinking about the pain because the pain is not in the body; the pain is here in the mind.

Q. If something wonderful happens to you, how do you react?

Paramahamsaji: Ah, many wonderful things have happened in my life.

Q. But you said you feel no pleasure?

Paramahamsaji: There is no use feeling pleasure. I say it is happening, that's all. What can I do?

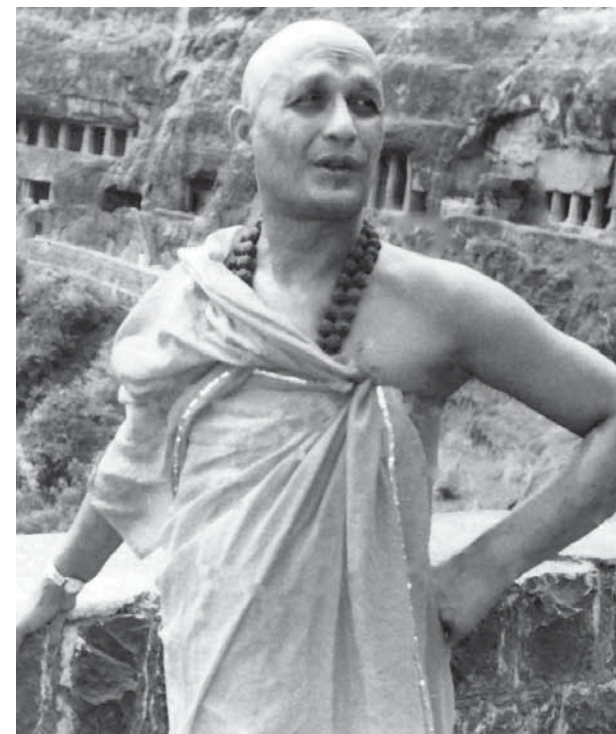
Q. And do you enjoy this situation?

Paramahamsaji: I see this situation as a witness. Just as I witness your pain and pleasure, I witness my pain and pleasure, because I know it is not external, it is internal. The sugar is so tasty; it is tasty in the mind not in the tongue.

Q. Is it because you think that if you give importance to pleasure it will turn to pain later on?

Paramahamsaji: No, I have never thought that. I have always been a pleasure-seeker in my life. For me life is beautiful. I have never hated life. I have never hated anything in my life, in anyone's life. I don't like the people who say, "Oh, it is wretched." I say, "No, it is not wretched", because everything is created through a divine process. The matter, the energy, prana, water, fire, earth, everything is created by a divine process. How can anything be abominable? Therefore, right from the beginning of my life, I have always been a pleasure-seeker. I have never run away from pleasure. Perhaps that is one of the reasons that I have become blunt; I am not able to feel it.

Q. Paramahamsaji, you say that we are in the process of evolution. If the soul is perfect and it's not the body that is necessarily involved from life to life, what exactly would you call that part of our being which is in the process of evolution?



Paramahamsaji: The consciousness of man, the atman itself. Atman is perfect, but evolution is still going on, it doesn't matter. You see, the energy is dormant in matter; it is not in a manifested state. At a point of evolution, the energy becomes separate from matter and then it is pure energy. This energy is the same energy as it was in the fold of matter. There is no difference so far as the structure of energy is concerned, but so far as the manifestation of state is concerned, there is difference. At that time it was nirakara, formless. Now it is sakara, with form. After the process of fission the energy has become separate, it has become sakara; it has become concrete. In the same manner, the spirit is always the same but it is undergoing a process of evolution because it is in the fold of matter.

Q. How did this happen?

Paramahamsaji: Oh that I don't know. I must be honest with you, this question I have never answered. I have read many books in the past, but I have never found an answer. I have met with very important people of my generation: Swami Sivananda, Sri Aurobindo, Ramana Maharshi, Swami Ramdas, Anandamai Ma, I mean as many people as I could. We have been contemporaries. They said, "Keep quiet." This is the mystery. This perhaps He alone knows. Why this creation? What is the fun of spiritual life? What is the fun of emancipation? What is hell and heaven? What is bondage and freedom? Why should He create this kind of drama? Why is He doing it and is He doing it or not? If He has created, does He know that He created? There are so many millions of people who are happy and there are so many millions of people suffering. Does He know that He put these people into this state and now they have become a part of their act? These are some of the questions which I have thought about a lot, but at a point I found a great barricade, a great boundary wall. I stopped thinking. With this question, I honestly say I do not know. I am sure you also will not know.

*The consciousness of man, the
atman itself. Atman is perfect,
but evolution is still going on,
it doesn't matter.*

Q. When we have accepted that we are souls, we are atman and we want to realize it, is it then basically only a question of time and purification, of constantly practising the asanas, the pranayama, the meditation and desiring them?

Paramahamsaji: It is just a question of time. You see, we are what we are, 'a thing in itself'. After realization we are going to realize just the same thing. Just as if you have a very valuable thing in your pocket and you are searching for it all over and finally you know it was in your pocket and you say, "Hey, it was here!"

There is a beautiful allegory. There is a deer in India called the musk deer. It has musk in its navel and there is a period when it matures. When this musk becomes matured it wafts fragrance, all over the aroma is hovering. Now the deer starts smelling it. It likes the smell so much that it tries to find out where it is. So it smells this side and runs to the right and smells again and tries to locate the smell to the left. In the process of locating the smell the deer runs so much that ultimately it gets tired and, never finding the smell, it dies.

That is happening to all of us. Just as the fragrance is embedded in the flower and your reflection in the mirror, in the same way reality is inherent here. You have to search for it within and not outside. He is outside too, He is everywhere, but you have to search for Him within. If you do not do it you will have the same problem as the deer who has the fragrance within but can't find it. It goes all round the forest and finally dies; he doesn't get it but a hunter gets it.

—Satsang at the home of Mr Vasilios and Mrs Lillian Papathanassopoulou, 18 January 1978



Meditation

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

This evening I have some attractive topics for all of you concerning yoga. In fact, if we want to explain the true significance of yoga we will have to tell you a lot about the science of meditation. All the forms of yoga are preparations for dhyana yoga, the yoga of meditation. The practice of hatha yoga purifies the body, the practice of bhakti yoga purifies the emotional personality, the practice of jnana yoga purifies the intellect. After these practices, you take to the practice of meditation.

When you close your eyes, what do you see inside? Consciousness, we see consciousness inside. Beyond the body is the mind and beyond the mind is the spirit. The purpose of meditation is to discover this unseen spirit in man. Through meditation we are able to transcend the world of name and form and then we can come to a world which has no boundaries and no limitations. Therefore we should remember that meditation is like a bridge which takes us from this shore to the other shore.

Man has discovered hundreds of sciences throughout history and through these sciences he has uncovered the mysteries of nature and matter, but the greatest science that man has discovered is the science of meditation. Matter is not ultimate, mind is not ultimate, thought is not the ultimate substance, emotion is not the ultimate aspect of the activity of the mind. Even as a scientist in physics is able to split matter and release nuclear energy, in the same way, in meditation a yogi splits the mind and he releases spiritual energy. Matter is composed of elements. The mind is also composed of many elements. Mind is not one entity, mind is a composition. When a



scientist splits matter he separates it into the component elements. In the same way, in meditation we separate the elements of the mind.

Emotion is one element. When you sit for meditation, so many thoughts come to your mind. They are the composition of the mind and therefore in meditation you should never control the mind. I want to repeat it again: in meditation, the mind should not be suppressed, thoughts should not be blocked. If you are concentrating upon a rose, on the sound 'Aum', on the cross or Christ, or upon your guru or your God, you must remember that many thoughts will come to your mind. That's natural and correct, and it should happen. If they don't come something is wrong.

That's where everybody is making a mistake. They think that if you concentrate on the rose, only the rose should be there, but the purpose of a mantra, the purpose of concentration, of pranayama, of yoga, is not to suppress the mind; it is to explore the mind. Everything must come out: past memories, visions of the future, all your problems, all that you know, all that you can think about must come out. That is called the practice of pratyahara. That is called the practice of raja yoga in which you are expressing the whole mind from subliminal depths to the conscious plane. Therefore, when you take a mantra, you must allow your mind to function. How long can the mind function? How long will the distractions remain? Finally the mind will be transcended. Thus, in the yoga of meditation we consider the mind as a substance and express the whole mind, and finally it is to be transcended.

Breath awareness

The whole process is a simple one. There are not many systems of meditation. Meditation is a systematic process. It begins with awareness of the breath, that's point one.

The breath is natural. In one minute we breathe fifteen times; in one hour, nine hundred times; in twenty-four hours 21,600 times. You have to do nothing except watch your breath. You can do it even now. You don't have to concentrate your mind. Awareness of breath is different from concentration on the breath.

Practising awareness of the breath, focusing on your nostrils, is point two. You can concentrate on the breath between the navel and throat, creating an imaginary mental passage between the navel and the throat, this is point three. You can concentrate on the deeper breath in the spinal column, fourth point. You can concentrate on the breath from eyebrow centre back to the pineal gland and from the pineal gland forward to the mid-eyebrow centre. This is the fifth point. When you practise awareness of the breath gradually through these five systems, you are developing your awareness; you are not suppressing your mind.

Now, you should integrate your mantra with the breath. First, the mantra can be integrated with the natural breath, and then the mantra can be integrated in the passage between the navel and the throat. The mantra can be integrated in the spinal column and the mantra can be integrated between the mid-eyebrow centre and the pineal gland, back and forth.

There are three types of breathing: one is the natural breath, the second is deeper than natural and the third is the deep breath. What is natural breath? You know it. You have been practising since your birth. I don't have to teach that. What is deeper than natural? You know that too. Sometimes you practise this when you are deeply asleep. The third breath I will tell you about. It is known as ujjayi pranayama in hatha yoga, and is produced by contracting the glottis of the throat and making a sound. This pranayama is practised by the cat; we practise it in

deep sleep. When you are able to practise awareness in the spinal column, then you must start ujjayi pranayama.

Now, kindly listen to both the English and the Greek: 'spinal cord', 'spondiliki styli'. The top of the spinal cord is behind the mid-eyebrow centre at the back of the brain. The bottom of the spinal cord is in the perineum, coccyx. You have to practise awareness of breath from the bottom, perineum, to the top, medulla. Your consciousness has to travel from the bottom to the top with the help of your breath. How do you do it? When you breathe in you ascend, when you breathe out, descend. This is called the ascending and descending of consciousness and it has to be done with the help of ujjayi pranayama.

They say, "Think So-Ham with the breath." When you ascend with the breath, think So and when you descend with the breath think Ham; this becomes So-Ham. Then sit down quietly with awareness of the deep breath, and include one more practice; you must fold your tongue and lightly press it to the upper palate. In hatha yoga this is known as khechari mudra. Keep on practising it for ten minutes. Let thoughts come in the mind, it does not matter. Let visions pass across the mind, it does not matter. If you begin to sleep, it does not matter; you have to do nothing but breathe up and down with Soham. At the end you must concentrate in between the eyebrows; this is a simple practice in meditation.

There are many other systems of meditation. You can practise them gradually, but the important thing is how to fix your awareness. Therefore, this is the basic practice. This will make your consciousness spontaneous and when the consciousness becomes spontaneous it becomes dynamic. The most important thing to be remembered in dhyana yoga is that we are not going to make the mind passive, but we are going to make it dynamic. The meaning of meditation, of dhyana yoga, is the way of union by developing your awareness.

Mantra

Mantra is most important in dhyana yoga. You cannot grow a vegetable without a seed. In the same manner, meditation cannot succeed without a mantra, and everyone has their own mantra. You have to discover your mantra; it is a sound, a syllable, a vibration. What is vibration? Vibration is consolidated in sound; sound is dissipated in vibration, and this sound is the basis of the universe. We say that this sound is eternal and this sound is occult. There are many sounds which we cannot hear and these mantras are revealed in deep meditation and samadhi. When you meditate and transcend name and form you are in samadhi. At that time certain words are revealed to you and that is your mantra. You don't have to get it from anyone; if you just transcend, the mantra is with you. Also, if you practise the sound Aum for ten minutes you can find a difference in your state of mind. From this it is to be understood that everyone who wants to achieve a high state of mind must have their own mantra.

Sitting posture

For meditation you must sit with your spinal cord upright and straight. An easy chair will not do and lying down on the back will not do. The spinal cord is important. Within this spinal cord there are three great nerve channels which control the physical energy, the mental energy and the spiritual energy. The names of these nadis are ida, pingala and sushumna. Ida is the mental energy, pingala is the life force and sushumna is spiritual awareness. These three nadis are enshrined in the spinal column. Therefore, when you are sitting for meditation the spinal cord must be upright and straight, tensionless.

Mooladhara chakra

When you are meditating, nothing is happening in the brain, nothing is happening in the stomach, nothing is

happening anywhere in the body. Everything is happening at just one point in the perineum between the excretory and urinary systems. In kundalini yoga it is known as mooladhara chakra. In the masculine body it is near the surface of the perineum; in the feminine body it is at the opening of the uterus, the cervix.

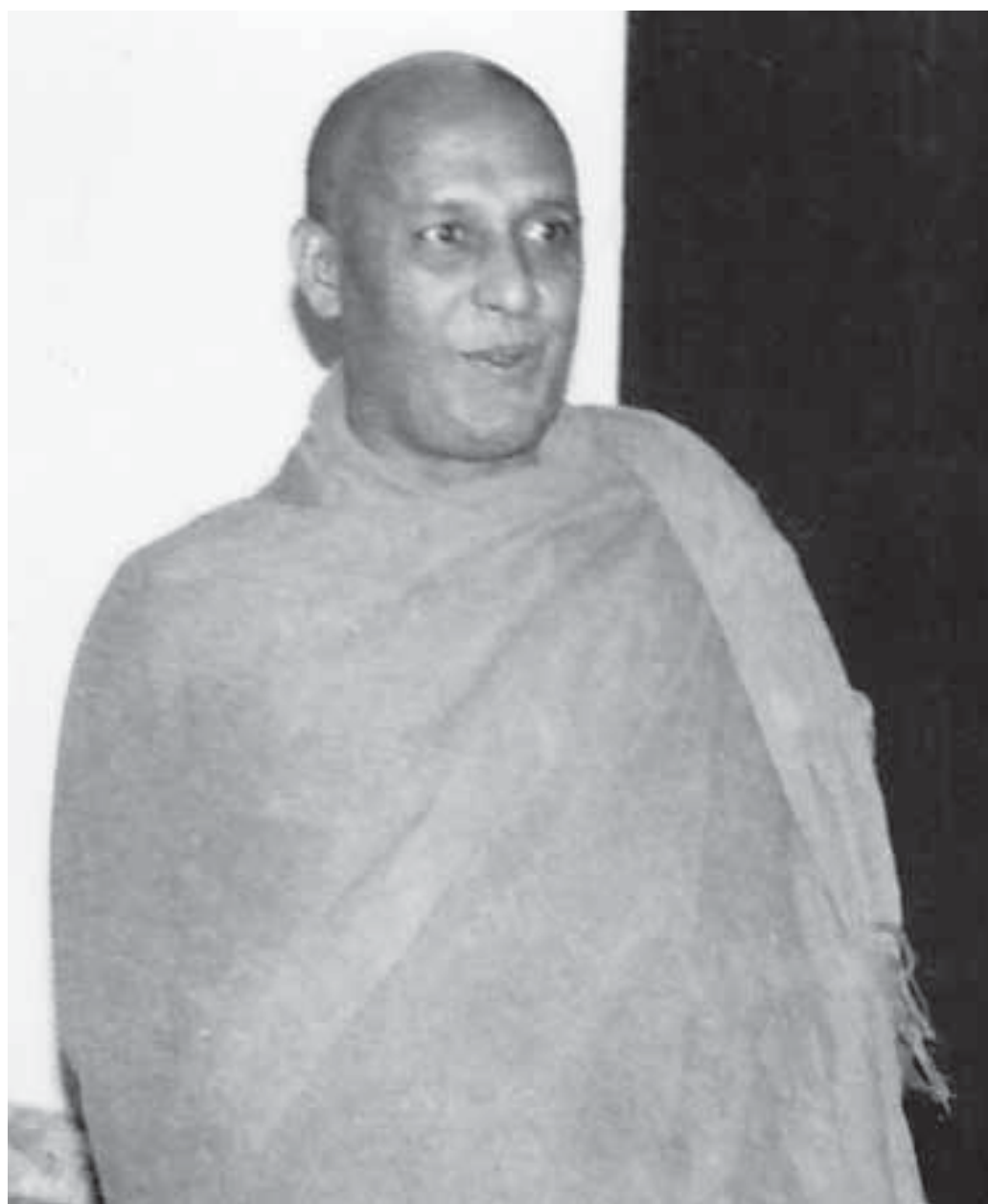
Now, this is an important point: all that is happening in meditation concerns the energy in mooladhara chakra and the awakening takes place there. Remember, energy is dormant in mooladhara chakra. That is the seat of kundalini and the dormant potential energy in man. When awakening takes place in mooladhara chakra, awakening takes place in the brain centre. In the brain there are centres of intuition; however, you cannot awaken the brain without awakening mooladhara chakra. The switch is in mooladhara chakra; you put it on and the light burns. There is no other way.

There is one switch in mooladhara chakra, and in all there are six switches, not seven. When you know how to switch them on, the light can burn in your brain and the purpose of meditation is to awaken the dormant potential energy in mooladhara chakra. Therefore, there are two asanas which are presented for meditation. One asana is known as the lotus posture, most of you might know it; the other is known as siddhasana, the perfect posture. You must practise meditation in either of these two, but siddhasana is best.

Evolution

I have just spoken a little bit about meditation. I don't consider this to be a thesis, it is an introduction and then you can read my books on meditation. Everything else that man is doing, animals also can do. What makes man different is meditation. We people are talking about evolution. How do we evolve? What is the way? By thinking do we evolve? No. by meditation we evolve. Which way should we progress, outward or inward? Inward. Inward progress is evolution. Outward progress is not evolution. When man becomes extroverted, he falls from the Garden of Eden. When man becomes introverted, he ascends to heaven. Meditation is a science by which man can evolve into a superman. Being superman is your destiny. Superman is a man who lives with intuition, with inner awareness.

Don't be afraid of meditation. It is very difficult; we say in Spanish, 'muy difícil', 'very difficult'. How hard it is for man to transcend name and form, to transcend the objective consciousness, but that is the ultimate destiny.



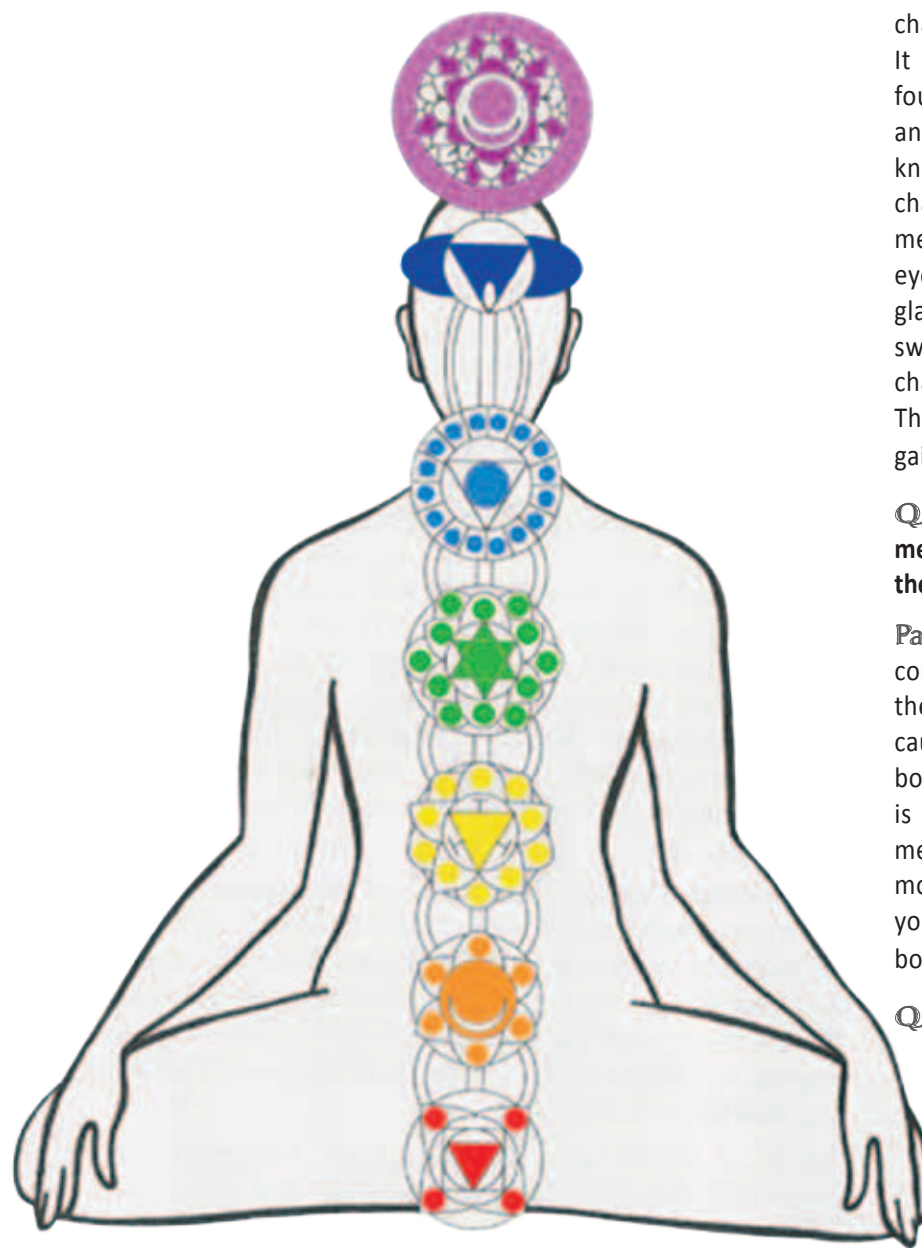
Questions And Answers

Q. What are dharana and dhyana?

Paramahamsaji: Dharana is one of the stages leading to dhyana, meditation. It is a practice of pictorial conception. For the mind there are three bases: the gross base, the base of the idea and the occult base. When you concentrate on your guru, that is the gross basis. When you concentrate on any object like Christ, a cross, a rose, that is a concrete basis because you can see it. The second type of base is the basis of an idea; you think of eternity, infinity, bliss, and develop that as a base. Third, you concentrate your mind on the unseen, or on unheard sounds, or you fix your mind on some of the occult centres of the body or on some of the forms you cannot see. This is called the occult base. When you concentrate on any of these symbols, that is called dharana.

Q. You said that there are six switches that turn on the light in the brain. One is in the perineum, where are the other five?

Paramahamsaji: I have I have spoken to you about the first switch, the second is a little above that one. It is in the sacral joint at the end of the spinal cord, at the junction where the tailbone begins. This is known as swadhisthana chakra. The third one, manipura



chakra, is behind the navel in the spinal cord. It is also known as the solar plexus. The fourth one, behind the heart, is known as anahata chakra; the Star of David, the Jews knew it very well. The fifth switch, vishuddhi chakra, is in the neck. The sixth is in the medulla oblongata, situated behind the mid-eyebrow centre at the point where the pineal gland is placed: ajna chakra. Out of these six switches, the most important is mooladhara chakra and the next in importance is ajna. The knowledge about these chakras can be gained by the study of kundalini yoga.

Q. What is the connection between meditation and the three bodies: the physical, the astral and the mental?

Paramahamsaji: Meditation makes the consciousness travel or traverse from the gross body, to the astral body, to the causal body. Meditation develops the finer bodies. In ordinary beings the gross body is predominant and more powerful but by meditation you try to make your astral body more powerful and by constant meditation you can develop the powers of the astral body.

Q. Why do visions come, thoughts come, smells come? Are they real?

Paramahamsaji: When the consciousness departs from the gross body and the astral body develops, then the signs occur. Yes, they are real.

Introduction to the Science of Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

First of First of all I bring you greetings from India. The relations between Greece and India are rooted in remote history. More than three thousand years ago our countries had a very great diplomatic, cultural and political relationship. Not only that, even marital relations took place between the people of Greece and the people of India, as when the daughter of Seleucus, the general of Alexander the Great, was married to Emperor Chandragupta. In India we know a great deal about your culture. I myself have studied Greek mythology. I've studied Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, and I personally feel that the people of India and the people of Greece are spiritually one unit. You may feel that you have a different religion but in India we do not feel like that, and therefore I told you in the beginning that I bring you the greetings of India.

There is a great science which we have forgotten. Our ancestors hundreds and thousands of years ago knew a lot about this science, but there seem to have been political accidents and we forgot all about that great science. Speaking frankly to you, I don't teach religion. I have respect for all religions and I think it is necessary for one to practise a religion for evolution. I personally believe that it is important for everybody to pray, but I see a problem, and the problem is how to make the mind quiet.

Modern day suffering

Today, there is tension in the world. Man has become restless. People are not able to sleep without tranquilizers.



There is a great conflict between religion and modern civilization, and man is completely torn between these two great forces. The great doctors, scientists and psychologists say that today man has become the victim of schizophrenia and neurosis. The most advanced countries like America and the wealthy countries like Sweden have people going crazy; people are going mad and they have become abnormal. The rate of suicide, the number of people who are suffering from high blood pressure or heart attack, is growing every day. Medical science is a great science but it has not found an answer. It has not been able to cure insomnia; it has not been able to give peace of mind; it has not been able to help us in integrating our personalities. What more can I say?

So, what to do? We believe in religion. I am a Hindu, you are a Christian, but Hindus, Christians and Muslims are all having mental problems today. You swear by the name of God: are you peaceful? Is your mind quiet?

During the last forty years the scientists have found that the potentialities are great in yoga. The practice of yoga can help you to get peace of mind. Scientists in America, in France, Germany, Japan, India, Russia and Australia are looking to the possibilities of yoga.

Research into yoga

Here in this assembly we have a swami from Spain. He was exposed to scientific experiments in the University of Barcelona. The doctors and scientists experimented on him and investigated the condition of his heart and of his body in yoga postures. When he was practising pranayama they also exposed him to the most modern, sophisticated instruments. He was also investigated whilst practising meditation.

The researchers of that university have indicated that a great change took place in him during the practice of yoga. During the practice, the alpha waves in his brain became very clear and prominent. The alpha wave is very important. When your brain develops alpha waves, the pressure from the heart is released and the blood pressure comes down. So if you take a subject with high blood pressure and ask him to practise certain yoga postures, the moment alpha waves increase, the blood pressure falls. I'm not going to speak a lot about this investigation; I'm just giving you a hint on how yoga can help us physically as well as mentally.

Now, what is yoga? Is it a religion? Is it a philosophy? Is it political? What is yoga? Yoga is a science. It is like mathematics. It can be proved. Yoga can accept the challenge of any science. When you are practising a yoga posture you can register the changes taking place in your body through scientific instruments. A scientist can tell you about your blood pressure, your metabolism, your respiration, your consumption of oxygen and your brain waves. Therefore people should not be afraid of yoga.

The yoga of balance

Yoga is divided into four sections. One is for the physical body, the second is for the life force, the third is relaxation and the fourth one is meditation. What does yoga mean? It means physical posture, breathing exercises, relaxation and meditation: these are the four sections of yoga.



Now, what is the first one? It's called physical postures, hatha yoga asanas. By holding a particular physical posture your glands are influenced. There are many glands in your body which have a great role to play in your health: thyroid gland, thymus gland, adrenals, pancreas, etc., and if there is an imbalance then physical and mental



diseases take place. You must have seen the little boys and girls that suffer from epileptic fits; that is due to glandular imbalance. By the practice of these yoga postures you can bring about a balance in the glandular secretions. If the body's nervous system is weak, one has a lot of problems. You must have seen a lot of people suffer from hysteria. Many people suffer from nervous breakdown or nervous depression. There are certain ways in hatha yoga by which you can strengthen your nervous system.

The many asanas of hatha yoga can be learned from your teacher, and I will be frank and say that by hatha yoga many, many diseases can be completely cured; it is a very

effective system. It is necessary, therefore, that every one of you should make a study of hatha yoga. If you practise hatha yoga for a period of a month or two or three, you will find that you are becoming energetic.

The second section is known as pranayama, which means the yoga of breathing. In this you breathe in such a way that you inhale more of prana, life force. This body is living on life force; if there is less of it we become weak. Therefore, in order to have more life force in the body, you must do the practice of pranayama.

The yoga of relaxation

The third section is relaxation and this is very important for all of you: for the doctors, engineers, businessmen, housewives, politicians, whose minds are under constant strain. At the end of the day these people are tired, and then what do they do? They are so tired that they can't sleep. They take alcohol, but after some time that also doesn't work. Then they take tranquillizers. After some time that doesn't work. Then they take strong tranquillizers, and then the heart is involved, the nervous system is involved, and what happens? After taking these tranquillizers for years, they have heart disease.

In yoga there is a system of relaxation. You do not sleep; you just lie down and do some practice mentally, and within ten minutes you are relaxed. Relaxation is important. Please remember, sleep is not relaxation. You have to learn this art.

Yoga of the mind

The fourth section is meditation; how to concentrate the mind and make it steady and one-pointed. When you pray, your mind is not steady. When you go to the sanctum sanctorum, your mind is wandering. Meditation teaches you how to concentrate your mind on one point. Once you learn how to meditate, you learn the art of life.

The most difficult thing in life is meditation, but once you know how to meditate, once you know how to concentrate, you are fortunate. The mind is very powerful, but when it is dissipated it is weak, just as the rays of the sun when they fall on the earth are weak, but when concentrated by a fine lens they are capable of burning anything. When the mind is scattered it is incapable, but when the same mind is concentrated by meditation it becomes powerful.

Yoga has many systems of concentration. You can concentrate your mind through breath, through a sound, or by fixing it on any of the centres of the body. You can concentrate your mind by fixing it on a particular symbol, but the easiest one I can tell you about is by fixing your mind on the natural breath.

Practise

Coming back again to section one; how long to practise hatha yoga? Maximum fifteen minutes. Section two; how long to practise pranayama? Five minutes. Section three; how long to practise relaxation? Maximum half an hour. Section four; how long to practise meditation? Maximum ten minutes. Now a question: should we practise all four or should we practise one of them? If you are tense, if you are tired, you must practise sections one and two. If you want to concentrate your mind, practise section four for ten minutes. Section three can be practised by anybody at any time for any length of time.

This was a very short introduction to yoga for all of you. Finally, yoga has come up as a science; it is not a religion but pure science. Yoga is the science of the body and the mind. It has no restrictions. Whether you are a vegetarian or a non-vegetarian, married or not married, young or old, it does not matter. Whether you smoke or not does not matter; but it is important that you must learn yoga from a very competent teacher. A competent teacher means that

he lives the life of yoga and that he knows the science and then he can tell you what you should practise. If you are suffering from sciatica or a slipped disc, he should know what you should practise; he should know what a diabetic must practise and he should also know what he should not do. This is very important: yoga should be learned not from a book but through a competent teacher.

As I told you in the beginning, our country and your country had very good relations in the past and we exchanged our cultures. Our people came to you and your people came to us. Our ancestors brought yoga to Greece and we took much from Greece's great culture back to India, and now the time has come again for us to unite and commune together.



Questions and Answers

Q. Does food have an influence on the evolution of the mind?

Paramahamsaji: No, yoga does not touch the subject of food for the evolution of man; he has to decide this question for himself.

Q. Can someone start with meditation or must one start with previous stages?

Paramahamsaji: If you are able to sit quietly for ten minutes without any problems in the body then you are able to start meditation directly.

Q. I'd like to ask what level of yoga you are teaching, to what level does it bring the mind?

Paramahamsaji: Oh, I teach yoga from the point of body, mind and spirit: all three. It takes one gradually from the gross level to the subtle level.

Q. If someone has a disease and cannot be cured, can yoga make him well?

Paramahamsaji: There are many psychosomatic diseases which are cured by yoga but I must be frank; sometimes some diseases cannot be cured by yoga.

Q. If a young child of four or five has some disease and can't be taught yoga—what will happen?

Paramahamsaji: For a child it is much better to go to medical therapy. For a person in a mental hospital it is much better that the authorities teach him yoga. In



Denmark yoga classes have helped the patients very much.

Q. The word “yoga” in Sanskrit means union with God, but you haven't said anything about that.

Paramahamsaji: Yoga does not mean union with God. I will give you a quotation from the scriptures; the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali has the following definition, “To have control over the functioning of the mind is yoga.” Yoga means equilibrium, harmony, but definitely when the mind is controlled, harmony is established, union between the lower soul and the higher soul takes place.

Q. To practise yoga alone needs strength of will. Is one capable of doing yoga alone without help?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, of course. Yoga has to be practised alone, but you need a teacher who can give you lessons in it.

—Discourse and satsang at Epimeliterio,
Kalamata, 19 January 1978

|| *The second step in yoga is a systematic life. You have to create a system in your life about purity, contentment, regular study of spiritual books, simple living and prayer to God.* ||

Taming the Mind: Meditation

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

I will begin with a little story so that everybody can understand. In the olden days there was a king who had four horses. These horses were untamed, unruly and undisciplined. Nobody could make use of those horses, as they were very dangerous. The king announced the prize of half the kingdom and his daughter if someone could tame the four horses. He also announced that if anyone failed to discipline the horses he would be kept in prison for his whole lifetime. Prince after prince came and tried to tame them, but not one of them could succeed.

After a few years, four people came to the king and they said they could discipline those horses. The horses were given to them and they went out of the kingdom. One of them came back within an hour with a fractured hand, another gentleman came back at noon, bleeding throughout the body, the third came by two o'clock, completely exhausted. The fourth one didn't return.

Days passed, weeks passed, almost one year passed, the second year also passed and twelve years passed. It was taken for granted that he was dead. One day, they saw a man riding a horse come galloping into the palace and they recognized the same man, and he was riding the same horse. They were surprised to see the man riding the horse, as it had been so undisciplined and wild. They asked him how he could control the horse. The man said, "First of all I followed the horse. Wherever the horse went, I went; whenever he rested, I rested; when he was grazing, I was cooking food for myself; I did not touch the

horse. As the days passed, the horse became familiar with me and in about one year's time I could get closer to the horse. In the second year I could touch the horse. In the third year I was able to feed the horse. In the fourth year I could hold the horse by a rein. By the fifth year I could put the saddle on him, by the sixth year I could mount, by the seventh year I could jump on him. By the eighth year I could make him move and by the ninth year I could make him understand how to turn right and left with the rein's guidance. By the tenth year he could gallop with me and I could make him race. In ten years I controlled the horse and made him useful; for two years I was going around the country on the horse's back, and today I am here."

This is a very simple story, but it tells us the secret of meditation. In meditation the main thing is the mind. The mind is undisciplined stuff. It is completely wild and full of dangers. In order to reach your goal in life it is necessary that you are able to control this horse. It is not possible now, as the moment you sit for meditation the mind begins to jump, it kicks you and gives you kick after kick.

What policy should one adopt towards the mind in meditation? Exactly the same policy the man adopted



with the horse; first stage, follow the mind, don't try to control it. When you have followed this mind for a long time, then you are able to handle it. If you interfere with the mind too much in the beginning it will never care for you. In the beginning when you sit for meditation, whatever thoughts come to you, let them come. It will take some time, maybe a year or two or even three, for the mind to purge out those impressions. The mind is full of impressions embedded in the subconscious. Some of them come in dreams, some of them are expressed in your day-to-day life, but most of them come through the period of concentration and meditation.

Throughout the day your mind is quiet, when you are working in your business or your shop, but the moment you close your eyes you see a host of thoughts coming from all around. Therefore, never make the mistake of controlling the mind in the beginning. That would be the greatest mistake in meditation. The mind becomes quiet by itself. You repeat your mantra, the mind will be wandering, still you continue with your mantra. Maybe for half an hour you are repeating your mantra and the mind is wandering around, it does not matter. Do not pull it, do not withdraw the mind, and you will find that after a few months or maybe a year or two, when you are practising the mantra the mind becomes quiet by itself. When the mind becomes quiet spontaneously, then you should start meditation.

Until you are able to exhaust your impressions it is not possible to succeed in meditation. Therefore, those who want to succeed in meditation must practise mantra for a very, very long time. When the mind becomes quiet, then you start meditation on a sound or on a form, a symbol, or on the breath, or in any of the psychic centres in the body and you will see that experiences will begin.

I must tell you again that when you are practising mantra it is like an act of purging. You may see your past; all

the guilt in your mind will come out, all the abnormalities of your personality will also start coming out. At this time many people are very disturbed because they expect everything too early and too quickly. People feel that the moment they close their eyes meditation should begin. When thoughts come in their mind they are greatly disappointed. There are people I know who have given up meditation because they say, "What can I do? When I practise mantra my mind becomes full of wanderings." It is because they do not know that the purging begins



first. If you practise your mantra with pranayama, in a year or two your mind will become quiet spontaneously, and when the mind becomes quiet you start your meditation.

What is meditation? To think of one thing at one time and of nothing else is meditation. A second definition of meditation is that you should be able to see the object in the mind clearly. If you are meditating on a rose you should be able to see the rose inside as clearly as you see one with your eyes open. Really, that is meditation; to be able to see the object with the mind. Now I see all of you with my eyes, but when I close my eyes I don't see you, I can imagine, but in meditation one is to see.

One is able to see the object with the mind. Just as in a dream you see many things, in meditation, with consciousness, you see the object very clearly. If you are meditating on your guru, you can see the guru in front of you in flesh and blood. It is not imagination, it is materialization. The mind materializes itself in the form of

your guru. It happens for a very short time, but even if you are able to see the object in meditation for the twinkling of an eye, that is enough.

Meditation is a most powerful state of mind. I can tell you now that there is nothing more important in life than meditation. When a person takes to meditation there is nothing difficult for him in life. He is the happiest man ever created by God; he is the real king because he is the master. Everybody can do it, a householder can do it, a monk can do it, but remember it is like training that wild horse. If you are not systematic with it, if you force it, if you compel it, it will teach you a nice lesson.

There is only one secret and that is mantra. If you go on repeating your mantra for one hour a day for one year, you will see the miracle of it. You can repeat the mantra, you can think of the mantra, you can whisper the mantra, you can even write the mantra. You can do what you like but the system is this: first loud chanting, the second stage whispering, third stage is mental, fourth stage with your natural breath, fifth stage with a little deeper breath, sixth stage with deep breath. With whatever time is at your disposal, from one minute to two hours, first practise and perfect the mantra, and after two or three years, you find that suddenly your mind becomes quiet.



Questions and Answers

Q. We in Greece really have an occult system of our own. Why should we prefer yoga to the system which is rooted in our tradition?

Paramahamsaji: I understand your point, but where has this occult system been for these so many thousand years? How many great saints has your country produced in recent years? Where is the tradition? How many people practise it? There is no use just voicing the fact that there is an occult system. The system is there, but the tradition is completely finished. Your culture could not resist Christianity. The whole Greek culture was converted, totally and completely.

You see, a culture must have power. India resisted Christianity and the onslaughts of Islam could not convert India, even with the sword. Here the whole of Greece was completely converted. The Greek man of three thousand years ago no longer exists. Where is Plato's Greece? Where is Socrates' Greece? You understand the point, any occult system must be really powerful. It must be clear.

Every occult system must be substantiated by science; it is not belief and not faith. If yoga is a good system it must be substantiated by science, not by me preaching yoga and you having faith in it, no. I must say, "This is to be proved by science." In the same manner, every culture, every system, must be backed by the statistics of science, then naturally, if anyone has their own system, they must practise it.

Yoga is not occultism or a philosophy; it is a science. Science is that which can be proved. Yes, you practise pranayama: what happens to the brain? It can be written



down. What happens to the blood pressure? That can be measured. What happens to the metabolism? That can be registered. If you practise meditation or the headstand pose, what happens to the brain? What happens to the lungs, glands, hormones? All that can be recorded, and that is science. It is not enough to say, "My system is good; yoga is good." You must prove it like mathematics, like physics, like chemistry, then acceptance is possible. The twentieth century man is sceptical; the primitive days were simple and far less complicated. Now a scientific approach answers man's probing questions.

Two of the most ancient traditions in the world are the Hindu and Greek cultures. Hindu mythology is older than the Greek system; other systems came much later. Whilst the Greek people had a philosophy, architecture, social system, art, science and medicine, religion, etc., the surrounding Europeans moved about, living naked like savages.

Both the Hindu and Greek cultures have their own gods and goddesses. The Greek culture was pantheistic, believing in many gods while the Hindu culture was theistic, believing in many gods but the source being one God. This is why, when Christianity came to Greece, having a monotheistic belief in one God, they could not resist it; whereas when they saw that India had many, many gods but at the same time the people worshipped one God, the Christians had nothing to say, they kept quiet. That was the philosophical resistance that we gave to Christianity and to Islam.

I will give you one example where you will find absolute similarity. In the Greek culture the sun god is called Apollo, the Indians call it Surya. If you read the Hindu and Greek mythology you will find very great similarities. Not only that, in yoga the sun is a very important figure. There is one practice, surya namaskara, the twelve postures of the sun, dedicated to Lord Apollo or Surya, the sun god. If you

study yoga thoroughly and then your own occultism, you will find that both are the same, there is no difference.

Q. We have read in books that yoga is one of the six occult systems of Brahmanism. You have said that yoga is not a religion, it is a philosophical movement?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga is not one of the six systems of Brahmanism; this is wrong. I think you have read the wrong book by the wrong author with wrong intentions. Yoga is one of the six systems of philosophy enquiring into the nature of the Supreme Being. What is philosophy? Knowledge of the truth. You see there are six systems of philosophy, not Brahmanism. The first is Charvaka, which is like Epicureanism in Greek philosophy. The second is Jain philosophy, the philosophy of hermits. The third is Buddhist philosophy. The fourth is the system of Indian logic. The fifth is Samkhya and the sixth is Vedanta. None of them is Brahmanic. Samkhya philosophy does not even believe in God; it is agnostic, and out of Samkhya philosophy is born yoga philosophy.

Q. Buddhism believes everything is maya, non-existence. For what purpose should we practise control of the mind and control of feeling?

Paramahamsaji: In Buddhism there is no maya. There is a dialogue between a disciple of Buddha and a king of Greece called Menander. During the reign of Menander, he invited a great disciple of Buddha to Greece and asked him two questions. The first question was how to exhaust karma; the second was what is consciousness. He answered, "Consciousness is like this candle. Just as the candle is burning, in the same way the Self is continuously effulgent, but this candle which is burning now is changing every second. The change is constant, and not only that, the change is sequential. Therefore, the difference between the

two moments is not seen and this appears as continuity." Buddha said that consciousness is momentary; it is subject to time and space. Time is a macrocosmic unit, but the minimum unit of time is less than a second. The disciple of Buddha told King Menander that the consciousness and the whole of creation are made out of moments. So there is no maya philosophy in Buddhism.

Q. There is constant inequality, war, crime and things like that. Why has God permitted all those things?

Paramahamsaji: We have not yet learned to distinguish illusion from reality. Life is maya. And so what if life is maya? What is the meaning of maya? You see, first of all, maya is the same as relativity in physics. What you mean by relativity in science, in philosophy is maya.

You must read some scientific books on yoga that clarify meditation, asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha, otherwise the mind will be confused. Yoga is not occultism. Occultism is one branch of yoga. You see these people talk so much about religion and they confuse yoga with religion.

Q. If life is not maya, if whatever we see, touch, breathe or feel is divinity, how do we try to approach, to touch, to experience in yoga?

Paramahamsaji: It's very simple. I'll explain it the other way. If you are blind and you are asked to see the sunlight, you can never see it. If I explain it in the best language, even if I sing a song, even if I explain it in one thousand and one ways, the blind man may understand but he cannot see. However, if he gets eyes you don't have to explain anything to him. He sees it. Yoga is a way to develop the eyes so that you may be able to realize yourself, otherwise all that you are doing is intellectual.

—Talk and satsang at the home of a devotee,
Kalamata, 20 January 1978

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. There is a movement in India now that teaches that all the other teachers or gurus or their systems will finish, will be destroyed, and all the great yogis will have to reincarnate on earth. Is it true?

Paramahamsaji: No, this will not happen in India. This can happen anywhere else in the world but the Indian way of thinking is entirely different from that of anybody else. I'll give you an example. Greece had a culture of its own, a religion of its own, but when it was invaded for century after century, everybody was converted. The old religion is no more. India was also invaded for centuries and centuries. There was a crusade in India, but they could not change us because in India we believe that the way is not one, there are many ways. There is not one guru, there are many gurus. We also believe in India that no system is perfect because every system is created by man. The only difference is that one man may be higher than another. As long as one has a human body, a human mind, one has human limitations. Even if God is born in this body, he has to die, because that is the law of the body.

Therefore, Indians have respect for all gurus and all religions. Even if a religion comes with the atom bomb in hand, we will respect it because we believe in ahimsa, non-violence. That is the Hindu culture. We don't want cruelty, we don't want war, we don't want to destroy anyone. Even a blade of grass has a role to play. Everything is useful.

Q. I asked you last night about how far anybody can go, I mean, which spiritual level or field someone can reach by yoga?



Paramahamsaji: Up to samadhi, up to self realisation—there are different names but what is important is only one thing, to become aware of your true nature, that is final. The names are different: we call it samadhi, others call it maha samadhi, others call it nirvana, others call it emancipation, others call it God-realisation. It is all the same.

Q. Paramahamsaji, you mentioned the Indian attitude of non-violence and yet one remembers reading the Bhagavad Gita and Arjuna's complaint about having to

go out and fight and kill the opposing army, members of his own family and his own caste, and the answer of Lord Krishna who said that a soldier had to do his duty, and if that duty involves killing, then so it must be.

Paramahamsaji: The Bhagavad Gita is symbolic; life is the battlefield, the two armies are the two forces of the mind, the dark force and the divine force. You get good ideas and bad ideas, they are two forces. Arjuna is you, me and all the individual souls, Krishna is the inner voice, the chariot is the body. Now, the individual soul sometimes does not want to face life, it wants to renounce the karma, the duty, the obligations, the responsibilities, because by renouncing them it will have less to fight in life. Then the inner voice tells the individual soul, "No! Fight you must." The individual soul says, "No sir, if I fight in life then I will have blood pressure, tension, depression, disease, tragedy, pain, I'll have agony. I don't want to fight!" The supreme soul, your inner being, your inner self says, "No, you must fight. Then only will you evolve in spiritual life. If you will not fight through this life, then you will not evolve, your evolution will become static." Again the individual soul, Arjuna, is asking, "Is it necessary to fight in life?" The inner spirit says, "Yes, evolution is a type of conflict and one has to go through the stages of conflict in life. A man without conflict cannot grow, but the end of conflict is victory." And what is the fight? The fight is between the two forces. One force is dark, anarchical and unrighteous and only talks about enjoyments, sensuality, etc. What is the other force? The other force is behind me, what we call the righteous force, the divine force.

So this is the symbology of the Bhagavad Gita in which the war does not mean a war like the First World War, the Second World War. In your Greek mythology also you have wars between the gods. You have read of them, I believe. They should not be taken literally. You will find in the story

that demons and gods were fighting with each other. What does it mean? They should not be taken literally, they should be understood symbolically. What is happening in you is a war. Sometimes this idea prevails and sometimes that one prevails supreme, so you are in a state of indecisiveness; not only you, everybody. You see the point?

You have to arrive somewhere, either you are defeated or you are victorious. If you lay yourself flat before this idea, you are lost, you are defeated, but if you surrender to this idea you are victorious. The idea that is progressive makes you victorious and the idea that makes you regress makes you defeated.



Now, another hypothesis. The Bhagavad Gita is a dialogue between a man with intuitive eyes and a blind man. I'm sure you know it. The Bhagavad Gita is a dialogue between a blind king and a man who has special eyes, you can say, television eyes, where you can see what is happening in the distance. The blind man is asking the question, "What is happening?" The man with intuition is telling him what is happening. Dhritarashtra is the blind king and Sanjaya is his divine courtier who is narrating to him what is transpiring between Krishna and Arjuna on the battlefield. The dialogue always takes place between guru and disciple. The guru has the eyes of intuition, inner eyes, the disciple has no eyes, he is blind spiritually. So the dialogue takes place between a man of knowledge and a man without knowledge. The man with knowledge is telling the man without knowledge how the individual soul is being guided by the spiritual soul in the conflicting arena of life. This is what we have been taught in India. You see the point.

Q. Does not the same apply to the Ramayana and other books?

Paramahansa: Yes, in India the story of Rama is known as Ramcharitamanas, I'm telling you the Sanskrit name. It means the life of esoteric Rama or the esoteric narrative of Rama; it's not exoteric Rama. The soul is esoteric Rama; Rama goes into the jungle, being exiled. We are also in the wilderness, we are also in exile.

Q. Can I ask something again? I don't understand the answer, of what you should do when you are in a war and you have to kill somebody. You have orders from the colonel or from your country and you have to kill to protect your family or someone else and you don't know what to do. Will you kill or not?

Paramahansa: That wasn't his question, but anyway, I can answer your question differently on individual merit.

Q. Because in theory, all right, we know whether it is right or not, but what do you do?

Paramahansa: In practice? Yes, in practice. India has a history where it has proved, where it has exemplified very carefully and clearly that violence cannot be met by violence. We have fought with invaders for over ten centuries. We never succeeded; we only created bloodshed and disaster. We fought with the British for only twenty-five years with non-violent methods and we succeeded. For only twenty-five years we fought with a powerful race, very intelligent, very shrewd and very political people, the British people, and we succeeded. We fought with other invaders for over a thousand years with guns or soldiers, and we never succeeded. For some time we may have succeeded, for fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years, then again we would lose.

The very concept of war is a mistaken concept of man. If not today, after two hundred years man will realize it. Wars, no matter how successful they are, leave behind a trail and trace of revenge. They leave behind them a sad remembrance which posterity cherishes: "I'm not going to forgive you and you are not going to forgive me." That is how wars have continued from generation to generation. Not because war is necessary, but because your ancestors killed mine. "Now I'm in power I will show you."

Ahimsa is the non-violent method which we are trying to bring home to the mind. If everything is done with love and with understanding, even your invader can understand it. If an invader attacks your country, he is not your enemy. He becomes your enemy when you retaliate. If you just give me one slap now, you are not my enemy, but if I then give you one slap back, then you are my enemy. If you slap me

and I say, "Mister, what wrong have I done that you slap me?" and you say, "You are a rascal!" and I say, "Maybe, but there should be some reason", I can bring home to your mind that what you have done is not just.

So we have fought for ahimsa for many centuries, and even today we believe that an atom bomb cannot be fought with an atom bomb, a sword cannot be met by a sword, violence cannot be met by violence. There has to be another method. I think mankind is coming to a point of understanding this. Maybe in another century we will be able to understand a better method of dealing with people who invade other countries. You see the point.

Q. You did not answer my question: shall I kill someone who is coming or not?

Paramahamsaji: No.

Q. Even in war?

Paramahamsaji: No, we should not have a war at all.

Q. Well, this is the start. We are already under the circumstances. We have war. Individually, what shall I do?

Paramahamsaji: We must try to find out ways of averting wars.

Q. Under the present system?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, it can be done. It can be done, it is being done. Mankind is trying today. Wars are taking place everywhere, but still we are trying to see that it is not inflamed. We discuss this often in India. Not only now, it is a centuries-old discussion.

Q. Do many people believe in reincarnation?

Paramahamsaji: I have found that most people in the world believe in reincarnation. Of course they believe in

reincarnation in their own way, they have their own way of thinking, but certainly everyone believes.

Q. Are you speaking about the common man now or the people who now follow yoga?

Paramahamsaji: The common man.

Q. This question has no answer because no one can know what happens after death, it's only a theory?

Paramahamsaji: I can give you some interesting information about it. I won't be able to give you the exact references at the moment, but in different countries deaths have taken place and soon after death, sometimes, people come back to life. These cases have happened within the range of investigating scientists in different countries in different times and these experiences have been compiled by research scholars. Funnily, all the experiences are identical.

The first thing about reincarnation that they have established is survival of something after death. If something survives after death, then we should discuss reincarnation, otherwise there is no use. How can we prove that something survives after death? This particular research work proves that after clinical death an experience has taken place so there must be a survival. If there was no survival how could an experience take place after death?

These people belonged to different religions and none of them were Hindus, none of them were Indian. The investigating scientists were Americans, Russians, Australians and French. The person died, that was proved. The minimum period for revival was five minutes, the maximum period was one hour, only in one case it was twenty-four hours. All these people were interrogated and they recorded an identical experience. All these



investigations took place within a period of thirty years; most of the people did not believe in reincarnation.

What was the experience? They first faced darkness, they entered into the darkness, they found agony and pain within themselves, they heard peculiar cries and screams and shouts. Then, after some time they found the darkness was diminishing, just like the dawn of the day, they found light growing little by little and they did not find any human being. They saw gardens of flowers that they never saw here. They heard some kind of music, not the music we have, then they returned again through the same darkness, and here they are. Now, the experience is not important, the important thing is who experienced it. If the man was dead, if nothing survives, then why this



experience? This experience shows that he was survived by some soul, so this is the first proof of reincarnation.

Second proof: during the past fifty years parapsychologists all over the world have collected cases of children who are able to narrate their previous life. Most of the children are about three years old and so there is no possibility of them being tutored by someone. Psychologists, parapsychologists and research scholars have conducted vast investigations into this, the point being how can these three-year old children remember their former lives, details of which can be found to be true? This is the second proof.

Therefore, I think for sure that reincarnation is the law of nature; reincarnation of a human species, reincarnation in the vegetable kingdom, reincarnation in many, many kingdoms. I think continuity is the law of nature. In the realm of nature, nothing is ultimately destructible; it is only metamorphosis or metempsychosis which takes place. The body is not ultimate. This body is a chariot. It's like a motor car. This body must have a passenger. The passenger is the Self. Consciousness is the passenger, with the memories, with the experiences. After death it migrates and then in order to fulfil its evolution it goes into another life.

Yoga is fundamentally a science of having control over your mental functions just as you have control over a motor car. If you don't have control over your motor car it goes right and left and goes haywire. If you don't have control over your mind you have mental and emotional breakdowns, and so many things. The classical definition of yoga therefore is to be able to hold complete mastery over all the dimensions of your mind.

—Satsang at the home of a devotee,
20 January 1978

Impressions

The passport

Swami Sivamurti tells of the journey to Athens after a seminar at Satyananda Yoga Centre in Kalamata.

We were about halfway to Athens to catch a plane to Barcelona, when I suddenly remembered that I had left my passport in Kalamata. I recall gasping at the time. Swami Satyananda was sitting in the front of the car and he turned around and said, "What?" I felt so embarrassed, "I have left my passport behind." He did not show any reaction. He just told me to make a phone call and ask someone to bring it to the airport. So, I made the necessary call, and asked for my passport to be brought to the airport.



We arrived at the airport just in time to catch the flight. Swami Satyananda passed through passport control, together with Swami Amritananda from India, and a Spanish swami, Swami Santaram. I remember feeling on tenterhooks the whole time, wondering if I would ever make it on to the plane. Time seemed to be moving very slowly, and it was well after the departure time. I looked at my watch, and realized there must have been a delay in the flight departure, as the plane had still not taken off. It was later that the realization dawned on

me that someone was behind the plane's delay, Swami Satyananda, as it was well past the departure time, and the person bringing my passport still had not arrived. Eventually, the long-awaited passport arrived and, together with it, I raced through passport control. I was at last escorted on to the plane and breathed a sigh of relief. Swami Santaram, who was waiting for me, said, "Swami Satyananda told me you would make it." I looked at Paramahamsaji, and he just smiled, as though nothing had happened. As I sat back in my chair, there was no doubt in my mind that the only person who could have stopped that plane leaving at its scheduled time was Swami Satyananda.



The spark that keeps me going

Sannyasi Aishwarya Devi describes how meeting Swami Satyananda changed her life.

My search for spiritual guidance began when I was a teenager, although the environment that I was growing up in wasn't an ideal one to help me in my quest. Still, my urge to find a guru was something I just couldn't ignore. But all I could do was wait, and let it happen.

The years passed and dancing became my passion in life. However, tragically, my husband suddenly died, leaving me behind with our two babies. Despite the unbearable pain, I dealt with this loss using all my spiritual strength and, at this point in my life, I met Paramahamsaji. The moment I saw him, I realized straightaway that he was the one I was waiting for. He completely transformed my life. He took me and my two children under his wing and carried us throughout our difficulties. His reassurance and protection was all I needed to move on. I gave all my trust to him completely. He was always there guiding me, and helping me make the most appropriate decisions in my life. He was the inspiration for me to set up a yoga and dance centre and live a spiritual yogic life.

My relationship with him cannot be restricted to these past few years. It is a lifetime relationship, and I can feel his presence every time I need him. He is the spark that keeps me going.

My first encounter with Swami Satyananda

Victor Hill, one of the earliest Satyananda Yoga students in Greece, describes his first encounter with Swami Satyananda.

My first encounter with Swami Satyananda took place in 1978 in Athens. He put me at ease immediately. I told him of the guilt I felt at my behaviour regarding women, and the pain I had caused to my wife and family. He looked at me, with the kind of commiseration one would hope from a wise parent, after having committed a typical childhood gaffe. "Regret nothing," he said, "Don't punish yourself. Put away regret and become aware." And those words have, ever since, been associated in my mind with Yeats' great lines which serve as a commentary on them:

*"When such as I cast out remorse,
So great a sweetness flows into the breast,
We must laugh and we must sing,
We are blest by everything,
Everything we look upon is blest".*



Face to face with the guru

Manos Tsatsakis, one of the first Satyananda Yoga students in Greece, speaks of his first meeting "face-to-face".

I was blessed to meet Paramahamsaji under ideal conditions, which show once more that nothing happens by accident. Absolutely nothing. For all things in life there is a 'before' and an 'after'. I also had the greatest luck to be one of the few privileged people to be present during those years when the teachings of Swami Satyananda first reached Greece. What deeply impressed me, from the first moment, was that all his students, who came to Greece to spread his words, were answering all my questions and worries in the most satisfactory way. Even more, they all radiated the deep love and the absolute respect that they had for their teacher. This gradual introduction to his work and his teachings was, for me, the ideal way in which I could have been made ready for a spiritual master.

Finally, the day came, and I met with him, face-to-face. I remember sitting at his feet, listening to his every word, and wanting that moment to last forever. The gentle gesture of his hands as he spoke, the tone of his voice, the simplicity of his character, his vitality, and constant willingness to find creative solutions for us; whatever we asked, he answered. And, above all, his radiance and aura impressed me so much, far more than any of his profound teachings. Beyond any doubt, I was so privileged to stand in front of a very blessed soul, a remarkable man, a unique personality that one seldom meets in life.

Chronicles

Swami Satyananda's first visit to Greece was a resounding success. From the very beginning, he captured the hearts of the Greek people; they loved him. Many people gathered to hear his discourses, which began in the capital, Athens. Following this, he gave a number of media interviews, receiving newspaper and television coverage. He gave a number of satsangs at the homes of devotees. He initiated a few into mantra diksha, before moving on to the second largest city of the Peloponnese, Kalamata. Here, traditional Greek values were tempered by Swami Satyananda's grace. His introductory discourse laid bare the historical relations between Greece and India, as he introduced the science of yoga. He conducted satsangs, and spoke at the local chamber of commerce, 'Epimeliterio'. From Kalamata he returned to Athens, before continuing on to Barcelona.



Greek Knowers of the Truth: Socrates

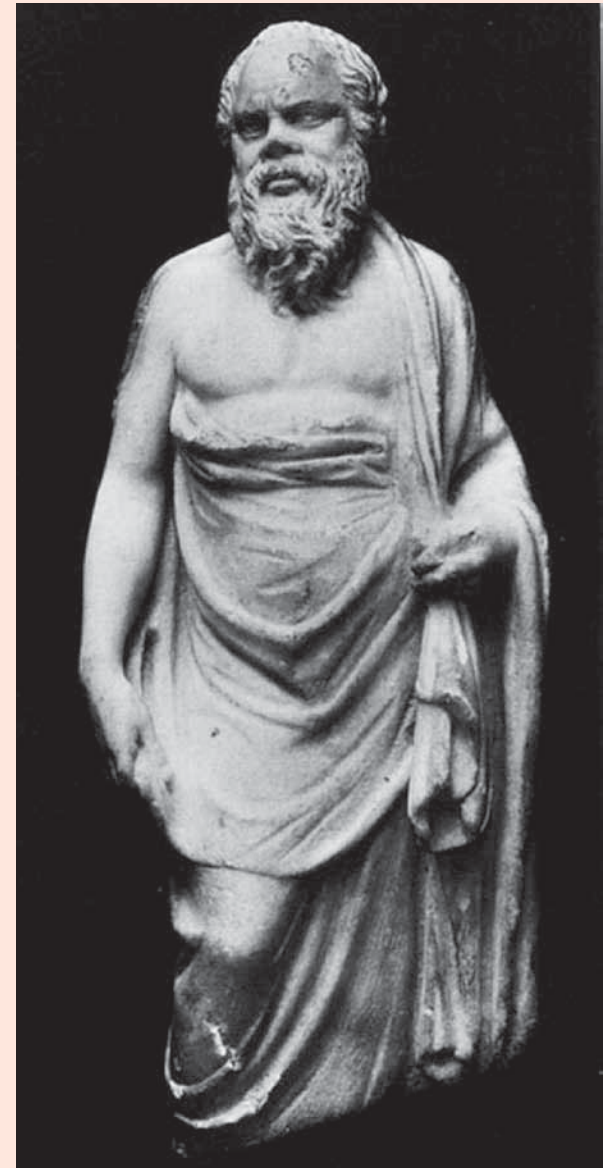
Socrates (c.469-399 BCE) was a classical philosopher and a central intellectual figure in late fifth century Athens. The influence of his ideas was enormous although he never wrote anything. His philosophical thought, which became a foundation for subsequent Greek and western philosophy, is known chiefly through his students Plato and Xenophon, the writings of Plutarch, and the plays of Aristophanes. Through Plato's dialogues, he is renowned for his contribution to the fields of ethics, epistemology, and logic. His famous elenchus, or method of enquiry, is known today as the Socratic method (teaching through a series of questions, not to seek a direct answer, but to encourage enquiry and insight into the issue under discussion). He lived and died in accordance with his philosophical principles.

Swami Satyananda on Socrates

Socrates was not a philosopher; he was a knower of the truth.

One who has known the Self as indicated by Socrates is a guru.

There is a difference between a guru and a teacher. A teacher is a knower of the science, a teacher is an expert of the science, but a guru is a person who has



experienced the invisible in himself. One who has known the Self, as indicated by Socrates, is a guru.

Socrates said, “Know thyself.” One thousand five hundred years before our era, the Buddha said the same thing. Three thousand years before the advent of Socrates, the Upanishads said the same thing. The central teaching of the Upanishads is “Know thyself”. In Sanskrit they say, “Atmanan viddhi.” The rishis, the saints and the seekers asked, “Who am I?”

If this body was the Self, then it was not necessary for Socrates to say, “Know thyself”, because everybody knows it. When he said, “Know thyself”, he meant that nobody knows it, and nobody knew it. He was sacrificed because unwise people do not understand what the Self is. For an Epicurean, for a Hedonist, the body is the ultimate. For a sensualist, matter is ultimate, but not for a yogi, or for a wise man.

There was a wise man in Greece many hundred years ago who used to tell his fellow men that they should know their own Self. His famous dictum was, “Know thyself”. He created a great revolution in thought and philosophy in this country but, even before that, in India there existed a philosophy and a doctrine saying the same thing. Long before Socrates was born, there was a system, a philosophy, and a discipline known as yoga. Religious people everywhere believe in one reality, but the philosophy of yoga believes in two realities and is, therefore, known as a dualistic philosophy, not a monistic philosophy. The philosophy of yoga says that consciousness and nature are the two eternal realities. A combination,

and interaction between consciousness and matter, produces what we call creation. Even in each and every particle of matter, in each and every object, in each and every thing that you see, there is a combination of consciousness and matter.

Swami Satyananda on the Self

When matter becomes gross then we become gross because creation is a process of manifestation of matter. Each and everybody, each and every individual, must try to return from matter, from nature, to consciousness. We know matter and we don’t know the Self. We talk about God, but we don’t know. We talk about higher transcendental things, but we don’t know. Talking about transcendental matters is one thing, understanding, experiencing and knowing transcendental matters is a completely different thing. When we know matter we know creation. But what about the thing within us?

We know only those things which are visible and which are gross, but do you believe or do you think that what you see is everything? Is there nothing beyond this gross and visible matter? Is body the ultimate? Is body your definition? Are you the body or something different from the body? Are you the mind or something different from the mind? Are you the senses and emotions, or are you the seer of those? If you are the body, then Socrates was a fool. If you are the body, the mind and the senses, and nothing beyond this, then not only Socrates, but all the great sages and wise men were fools, but I think we are not wiser than they were.

Yoga is an attempt, yoga is an effort, to search for the reality behind the appearance. There are two distinct events in creation. One is called reality and the other is called appearance. This body is appearance. Your external form is an appearance. Matter is an appearance, but what is reality? This reality is something which one has to know. This reality is not an intellectual philosophy. This reality is not what is written in the books. This reality is a matter of your personal experience and therefore yoga tries to serve this reality. In order to experience and understand this reality you will have to go into yourself.

Sayings by Socrates:

And in knowing that you know nothing, that makes you the smartest of all.

I know nothing except of my ignorance.

The unexamined life is not worth living.

Virtue is the beauty of the soul.

From Plato, “The Republic”

Socrates narrates: “Most people, including ourselves, live in a world of relative ignorance. We are even comfortable with that ignorance, because it is all we know. When we first start facing truth, the process may be frightening, and many people run back to their old lives. But if you continue to seek truth, you will eventually be able to handle it better. In fact, you want more! It’s true that many people around you now may think you are weird or even a danger to society, but you don’t care. Once you’ve tasted the truth, you won’t ever want to go back to being ignorant.”



1979

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Day-by-Day Itinerary

Swami Satyananda arrived from Colombia, and toured Europe extensively during the summer of 1979. Starting in Greece, he conducted a three-day lecture tour in Athens, accompanied by Swami Amritananda from India.

Saturday, 18 August

- Satsang at the home of the devotees Dr George and Mrs Elektra Tongas, in Athens. Swami Satyananda gave his

opening discourse on Greek and Indian heritage. Fifty people attended. During dinner with Swami Satyananda, he gave unique insights into jnana yoga and its relationship to hatha yoga. He elaborated on polytheism, and the connection between Greece and India.

Sunday, 19 August

- Swami Satyananda gave a lecture at the yoga centre in Drosopoulou Street, Kypseli, Athens. The title of his discourse was, 'The Universal Role of Yoga in the Modern Era'. One hundred aspirants attended.
- Mantra diksha at Drosopoulou Street, Kypseli, Athens. Swami Satyananda's discourse was entitled 'Diksha: the Meaning of Diksha'. He stated that the purpose of mantra initiation is to awaken psychic awareness. He also discussed the importance of the guru as a spiritual guide in an aspirant's life. One person received poorna sannyasa.
- Satsang and lunch at the home of Mr Vasilios and Mrs Lillian Papathanassopoulou. Swami Satyananda discussed the importance of yoga and good health. He spoke on how yoga leads to tranquillity and creates the base for family happiness.
- Public discourse at Holiday Inn, Athens. Swami Satyananda spoke on 'The Science of Yoga'. There were over a thousand people present. At one point, a woman approached and asked about her health. Swami Satyananda closed his eyes, and everyone fell silent. After some time, he opened his eyes, and then told her exactly what the problem was and the yogic practices necessary to correct it.

Monday, 20 August

- Press interview, "A guru who can perform miracles, but chooses not to." The interview was with Nitsa Manolakaki-Mansour, 20 August 1979, in the Athenian newspaper, Eleftherotypia.

SATYANANDA

ΣΤΗΝ
ΕΛΛΑΔΑ
(ΑΘΗΝΑΙ)



«Όσο περισσότερο προοδεύει ο πολιτισμός τόσο περισσότερο ο άνθρωπος υποφέρει. Μπορεί να έχουμε αύξησει τις πνευματικές γνώσεις μας αλλά άκόμα άγνοούμε τόν έαυτό μας».

Ήρθε ο καιρός να κάνουμε μιá συγκεκριμένη προσπάθεια για να γνωρίσουμε τόν έαυτό μας. Για να τó επιτύχουμε πρέπει να στραφούμε πρós τή ΓΙΟΓΚΑ».

SATYANANDA PARAMHAMSA

1979 publicity leaflet

From the Media

A guru who can perform miracles, but chooses not to

Nitsa Manolakaki-Mansour in the Athenian newspaper, Eleytherotypia, 20 August 1979

“In India, great gurus, through the practice of yoga, can perform all sorts of miracles. They can even grant life back to a dead man.”

This statement belongs to Swami Satyananda Saraswati, who arrived in Athens the day before yesterday. He shares his happiness with all, indiscriminately, and without expecting anything in exchange.

Q. What exactly is yoga?

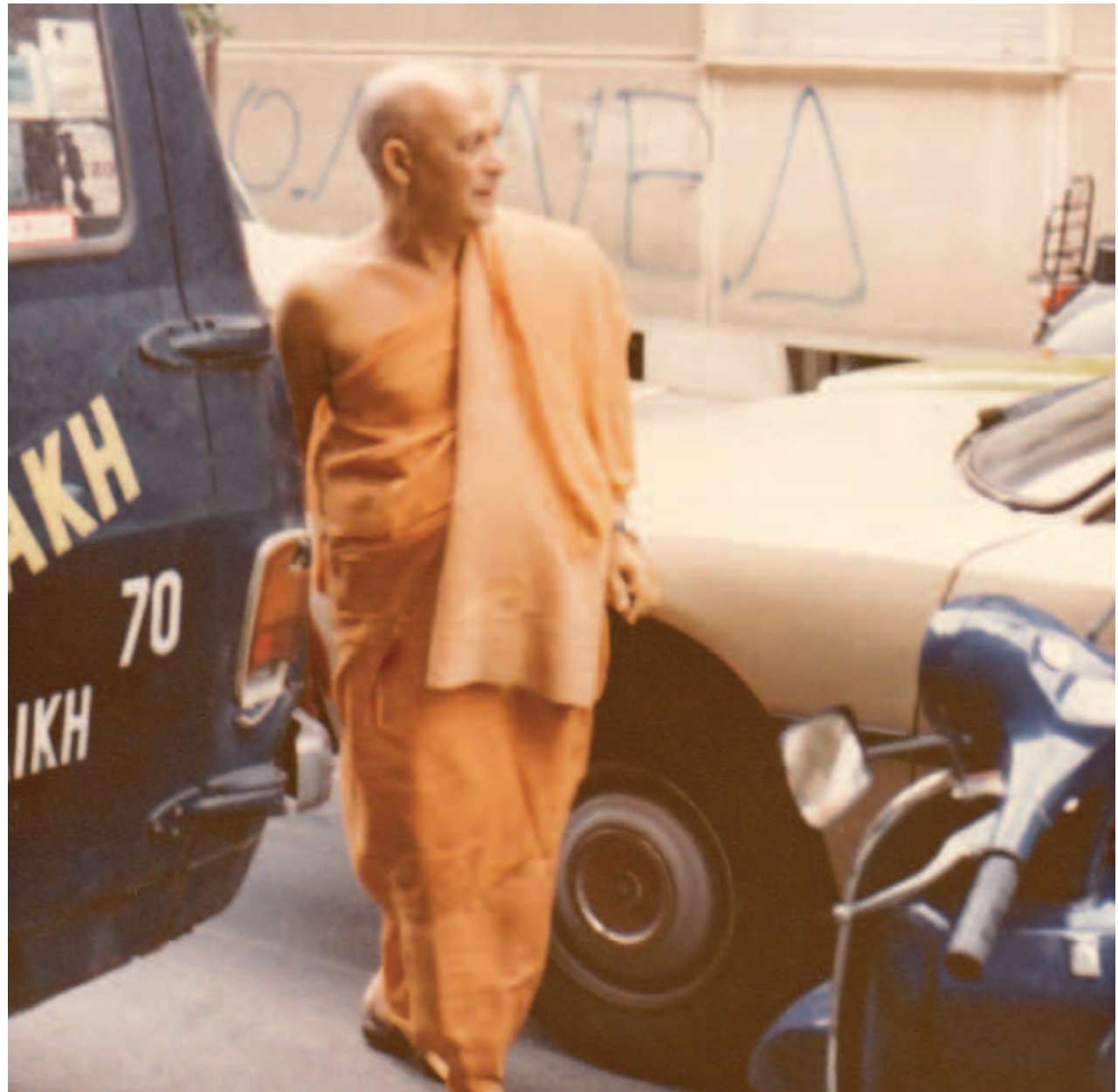
Paramahansaaji: Yoga is the art of controlling the involuntary functions of the mind, which means yoga is a system of techniques by which you can have control or mastery over the conscious, subconscious and unconscious principles of the mind.

Q. Is yoga suitable for Greeks?

Paramahansaaji: Yoga is suitable for everyone, for anyone who wants to have discipline of the body and mind.

Q. Is there anything you could say about the Greeks in particular?

Paramahansaaji: Well, the history and the culture of these people bears witness that yoga was not unknown to Greeks in the past. We know as far back as Socrates and what he used to say about “Know thyself”, which is the central theme of yoga philosophy. But in the course of time, accidents in history made Greek people forget their



ancient links with yoga. We can even say that the traditional heretics emanated from Greece, you know, the swamis or the people who were able to go beyond the body and mind. They were also known as cynics. And I also have to make a reference to Greek mythology, Homer's polytheism, and the many gods.

Q. What is the place of this Homeric polytheism?

Paramahamsaji: These gods and goddesses of Homer were nothing but the symbols of the mental and spiritual stages of man.

Q. What is the basic message, the core of your philosophy?

Paramahamsaji: What is the message? The message of yoga is that man must be able to master himself, his body and mind.

Q. What is the central point of yoga? Not so general, but more your personal view. Every master has his own basic thought about yoga. Is there something you believe more specifically?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, I understand. You see, man is sick in this era. Man is sick and he needs yoga and there is no other answer except to do it.

Q. What about a more symbolic word, like 'love' for instance? For Christians this word is more serious.

Paramahamsaji: You see, that is not possible in yoga because yoga is science.

Q. What is the basic reason that man is sick today?

Paramahamsaji: Man is sick today because he does not know how to make contact with his body and mind. His food is bad, the air is polluted, so naturally he is sick. He

has depressions and tensions. There is no cure for tensions anywhere except in yoga. There is no cure for insomnia except in yoga.

Q. Is yoga religious training, religion or dogma?

Paramahamsaji: No, yoga is a science. It is open to investigation in the laboratories. It's not a belief. Its effects on the body can be measured scientifically.

Q. How can yoga be applied practically in our life?

Paramahamsaji: One must practise it every day, half an hour, minimum.

Q. What is the practical aspect of yoga in our lives?

Paramahamsaji: It improves health. It gives tranquillity to the mind. It creates a base for family happiness and if there are chronic diseases in the body such as diabetes, it will help.

Q. People have heard that in India there are people, saints or yogis, who have occult powers and can perform so-called miracles. Is that true?

Paramahamsaji: Yes. We can say it is true.

Q. How is this possible? What is your opinion?

Paramahamsaji: It's not a question of opinion. When the mind evolves it becomes powerful. Every man has infinite potentialities and thought is the greatest power. When thoughts are dissipated, broken, they become weak, and when thoughts are concentrated they become powerful.

Q. Can one bring a dead person back to life?

Paramahamsaji: Yes.

Q. Why do you let people die and not bring them back to life?

Paramahamsaji: Death is natural. Everybody must die. If we resurrect everybody, we break the law of nature. Miracles are done in order to resurrect the faith of man. Just one or two cases can happen, not everybody. The purpose of performing a miracle is twofold. First, it is to demonstrate the power of spirit and second, to help a man improve his faith.

Q. Did you ever witness such a miracle yourself?

Paramahamsaji: Oh yes.

Q. Can you give us a specific example with date, age, place?

Paramahamsaji: Hundreds. My guru was Swami Sivananda. He left his body in 1962, in Rishikesh, Himalaya. He could communicate from anywhere.

Q. Was he communicating with you until today?

Paramahamsaji: Always, always.

Q. What is your opinion on the other life? How is it after you die? What is the place like?

Paramahamsaji: It's not exactly the same as Christians believe. You see, it would be much better if this question was asked in a different context, because it has nothing to do with yoga. The principle is that life is immortal. The body is limited but the consciousness is migrating, it is evolving.

Q. Can you personally perform such miracles, as a result of your yoga practices?

Paramahamsaji: I can do it, but I don't do it.

Q. Why don't you want to do it?

Paramahamsaji: Because not everybody is allowed to do it.

Q. Not allowed by whom?

Paramahamsaji: Not allowed by the great masters.

Q. Did you wish to be a wealthy man?

Paramahamsaji: Me? I have plenty of wealth which I've distributed. Millions of dollars I have given. I have no bank account, I have no house of my own, not one dollar, no property. Whatever I get, I give. Wealth does not solve the problems of life. The mind creates problems and the mind can solve problems.

Q. How many devotees, how many followers do you have all over the world?

Paramahamsaji: I don't keep count.

Q. Not even a rough idea?

Paramahamsaji: I don't think it's really devotees. The people are there, I love them, and they love me.

Q. Thank you for everything.

Paramahamsaji: Thank you for coming here.



Greece and India

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

After the period of Alexander the Great and during the reign of Seleucus, Cyprus was a main trading island where spices and valuables, such as emeralds, gold and diamonds, were exchanged. Did you know Alexander went to India? He went to the Punjab, the north-West frontier. He crossed the Khyber Pass to Afghanistan and then went up to Punjab and, after Punjab, he was compelled to return home. He crossed the river Jhelum. In Punjab there are five big rivers which are all tributaries of the mighty Indus river: Beas, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej. Alexander crossed the Jhelum river with rafters during the flood season. After this, his soldiers refused to go beyond that point. There was a revolt in Alexander's army and so he turned back and died on the way home. He was succeeded by a general whose name was Seleucus.

Seleucus crossed the River Chenab and went up to where the airport of Patna in Bihar now is, and there he had to surrender to the then ruling king called Chandra Gupta. Here in Greek literature, he is known as Chandra Kotas. The daughter of Seleucus was Helena who was married to Chandra Gupta. So that was the first marriage between India and Greece.

After that, there was a permanent embassy and a diplomatic exchange between Greece and India. The ambassador of India used to stay here in Athens, and the ambassador of Greece used to stay in the court of Chandra Gupta. One of the ambassadors was Megasthenes and he wrote a lot of accounts as to how India was ruled, what type of committees they had, what type of parliaments they had, how they held elections, what type of armies





they had, how they built houses, and how they married. During that period, about a hundred and fifty to two hundred years, there was a frequent exchange between Greece and India, not only commercial but even marriages were settled. The Indian girls came here, and the Greek girls went to India. So, sometimes when I see the eyes and noses of the Biharis, I think, "This person seems to be a Greek!"

After the empire of Athens declined, the diplomatic exchanges became very poor between India and Greece and, in India also, we had to face political difficulties: the invasion of the Huns. Although we expelled them from India, we became weak. What makes a nation weak? Although the Huns were expelled from the borders of India, we became very weak politically, economically and militarily. After the Huns came the Muslims and that also became a difficult time. The diplomatic relationships between Greece and India were completely finished during that period. We are taught this at school in India.

In school we also learn a little bit about Greek mythology and a comparative study of Hindu mythology and Greek mythology, such as the story of Rama, Sita, and their father and four brothers. Sita, the great queen, had been kidnapped by the demon king. There are similar stories, comparative stories, here in Homer's mythology. We also have stories concerning surya, the sun, and agni, fire, which are similar stories. There are many people who have written comparative studies between Greek mythology or the polytheism of Homer in Greece and the polytheism of Vyasa in India. Vyasa was the author of the Mahabharata, which includes the Bhagavad Gita. In India, Vyasa holds the same position as Homer holds in Greece, and the writings of both are polytheistic and contain similar stories. Some of the words may change slightly. I say 'Chandra Gupta' in Sanskrit, and here you say 'Chandra Kotas'. Now the scholars have to compare both words and bring them together with their research. We also have a lot of studies about Socrates, but not much about Plato. We know about his teachings, but not much is taught about it, because Plato's system of society and politics was not agreeable to Indian thinkers.

Q. How about Aristotle?

Paramahansaji: We know about Aristotle, but we call him 'Arestu'. We don't say 'Aris-tot-el', we say 'Ares-tou'. We call Socrates 'Sukrat', and Plato we call 'Afelatu'.

Sukrat was a Vedantin. He was a monotheist, he was not a polytheist. The Greek religion, by nature, is polytheistic like the Hindu religion, with many gods and goddesses. Christianity is not polytheistic. Islam is not polytheistic. Judaism is not polytheistic. There are only two religions in history that are polytheistic: the Greek and Hindu religions.

Sukrat was monotheistic like Shankaracharya in India. "Know thyself" is the central teaching of Sukrat and it is also the central teaching of the Upanishads. The Upanishads and all the gurus in India say only one thing, "Know thyself." They ask, "Who are you? Are you the body? Are you the mind? Are you the senses? Are you Mr this or that? Or are you something else?" That was also the teaching of Sukrat.

Our children are taught many stories about Sukrat. There are also many poems and one of the poems is about when a king came to India that Sukrat knew. He said to the king, "Are you going to India?" The king replied that he was, so Sukrat said, "Look here, when you go there, please bring some things for me." The king asked him what he should bring. Sukrat said, "Bring



tulsi.” Tulsi is a plant which Hindus like and deeply respect. It is like basil. Hindus consider it the holiest plant. Sukrat also asked the king to bring the Bhagavad Gita and some Ganga water. Hindus have these three things at the centre of their religion: one tulsi, second Ganga water, and third the Bhagavad Gita. These are the three basic things in Hindu religion. A Hindu means three things: Tulsi, Ganga and Gita. If he has respect for these three, he is a Hindu. In every Hindu home, the women take special care of the tulsi plant in front of their house. They have a big altar and, on the altar, they grow a tulsi plant. Every morning after their bath, without changing their wet clothes, the women come with water and offer it to the tulsi plant. The first thing they worship is that plant.

Q. Is there any meaning in worshipping the tulsi plant?

Paramahamsaji: Of course, there is a meaning. There are so many stories, but I want to know whether you have any such concept in Greece?

Q. We have a concept in the Orthodox Church. The priest puts a piece of vasilikos (basil) in holy water and then he blesses the people by shaking the basil with the holy water on to the people.

Paramahamsaji: The same thing! Just before a Hindu dies, they pour a little of that vasilikos and Ganga water into his mouth. They say that then he is surely redeemed from his problems.

In the history of mankind there have only been two polytheistic religions, one here and one in India. But India fought very hard. Greek people could not fight. They had to surrender before monotheism. India did not surrender before monotheism. India maintained both concepts of polytheistic and monotheistic religion. God is one, and God

is many. Do you understand? God is one, and is many. But here, Greek people had to surrender. They could not manage to protect the polytheistic beauty. You see, polytheism has a beauty in it. It has beautiful stories, it has beautiful symbols. However, when there is monotheism in religion, the religion becomes too dry. It is like philosophy. A religion has to be a little more than philosophy, it has to be aesthetic; there has to be some beauty in religion. The Greek people did not have the power of resistance that India had.

We never call your country Greece; we call it Unan. That is the name from Sanskrit. It is called ‘Yawan’. From Yawan it became ‘Yawanani’, and the people living there are known

as ‘Yawans’. Hefty people who are tall and beautiful are called Yawans in India even today. ‘Ya’ eventually became ‘Ja’. Even now a healthy tall man, with broad shoulders, a beautiful face, and with good health is called a jawan. ‘Jawan’ has come to represent youth and strength. So, this country was known as Yawanani, or Unan. And the people here were known as Yawans. We never use the word ‘Greek’ or ‘Greece’. We also don’t say ‘Alexander’ for Alexander the Great. We call him ‘Sikander’ from Unan.

— *Satsang at the home of Dr George and Mrs Elektra Tongas, 18 August 1979*



The science of yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Swami Sivamurti: 'Hari Om Tat Sat' is the yogic way to greet you and express joy at being here together with you. I am especially joyful, as I have the opportunity to introduce you to one of the greatest living masters of yoga in the world today, my guru Swami Satyananda. I would also like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all those who know and love him, to thank him for coming here and being with us this evening. Swami Satyananda is on his way to preside over various yoga seminars and international conferences, being held in Europe in his honour, and Greece is his first port of call. I hope, as I am sure many of you here this evening do, that he will come back many, many, many times to these shores, to be with us and share his message of yoga, about which he will speak this evening.

Swami Satyananda: When yoga comes to Greece, it is India that comes to Greece. Yoga is a science, a culture and one of the most important disciplines for human life. Perhaps you are aware of the connections and associations between India and Greece. India in general and Bihar in particular, had very close relations centuries ago. And it is the province of Bihar that I come from. It is also from Bihar that yoga has gone from 'shore to shore and from door to door', and it has now come to Athens.

Bihar was a centre of diplomatic associations and other such activities between Greece and India. During the course of centuries, the relationships between India



and Greece became so intimate that the girls from Bihar and girls from Unan (that is, Greece) went to each other's country to marry.

Know thyself

In world history there are only two polytheistic cultures. One is the culture of Hindus and the other is the culture of the Greeks. The polytheism of Homer in Greece and the polytheism of the great scholar Vyasa in India are the mythologies that are compared by scholars. The

Upanishads from India teach that one has to know one's Self in the same manner as Sukrat (Socrates) used to say "Know thyself". Over the years, things changed and Greece lost all that was its own. However, India maintained its spiritual and yogic culture. It is the most important task for man to know his own identity in relation to the cosmos. Man is not just an animal; he is the nucleus and not the circumference. Culture is the circumference, religion is the circumference, and the political structure is the circumference, but man is the centre. Therefore, it is very important that man has to discover his own nature, his own personality, and the nucleus of his own existence.

We identify ourselves with religion, culture and political structures, but are we only those things? Or are we something more than them? That's why Socrates said, "Know thyself". Did he say anything new? I know myself, I am a swami, you are Mr so and so, and you are Mrs so and so. You are a father, you are a mother, you are a daughter, and you are a sister. I know myself. So why should Socrates say, "Know thyself" if I know myself? Strange as it may seem, man does not know himself in reality. That's why Socrates had to tell him to know himself.

The science of yoga

Man's existence is a composition of body, mind and spirit. We associate and identify with the body, therefore we know ourselves as men and women. We identify ourselves with the mind, and so we feel ourselves happy, unhappy, emotional, fortunate, and so on. However, we have never identified ourselves with our spiritual dimension or origin, so we do not know ourselves. The science of yoga is the way to discover one's real nature and identity in relation to one's spiritual existence. The science of yoga deals with the body, the mind, and the spirit as well. Therefore, there are various branches of yoga in order to realize and know that we have a body, a mind, and a soul.

Hatha yoga deals with the intricacies of the physical body. Raja yoga deals with the mind and its various dimensions. Jnana yoga deals with the real man. When man is extroverted, and when his senses in the mind are externalized, then he is aware of the body and the mind. However, when he knows how to withdraw the mind and go deep into his spiritual existence, then he sees his infinite potentialities.

Jnana yoga

The word jnana means total awareness. It's not total forgetfulness. It is not total unconsciousness. It is not a state where you lose yourself. Jnana yoga is a system in which the awareness is expanded, not eliminated. But what is awareness? By awareness you 'know'. It is through awareness that you have the knowledge of existence of the



whole world. When the awareness is external it becomes sensuous, physical and material, and associates itself with the body. But when this awareness internalizes, then it reveals genius, and becomes infinite. Jnana yoga is going to be the panacea of human ills of our century and of our cultures. I'm not going to use the word 'meditation' very much tonight. Meditation is an inadequate expression for jnana yoga. When the awareness is conquered, and when the flow of awareness is constant and consistent, that's jnana yoga. There is no science or religion anywhere that teaches this except jnana yoga.

Jnana yoga has been experimented with by scientists and they have found that during the different stages of jnana, the physical body registers changes. Changes in metabolism, in the brain wave frequencies, and in the inner body temperature. This is a clear indication of the functions of the autonomic nervous system. An increase in the energy level of the body, the consumption of oxygen, the rate of respiration, and many other factors have been properly investigated by scientists. They have found that jnana yoga is going to be the nectar or ambrosia of mankind. This means that jnana yoga is not just philosophical acrobatics, nor abstract practices. It is not even a deliberate escape from reality, nor a forgetting of the problems of daily life.

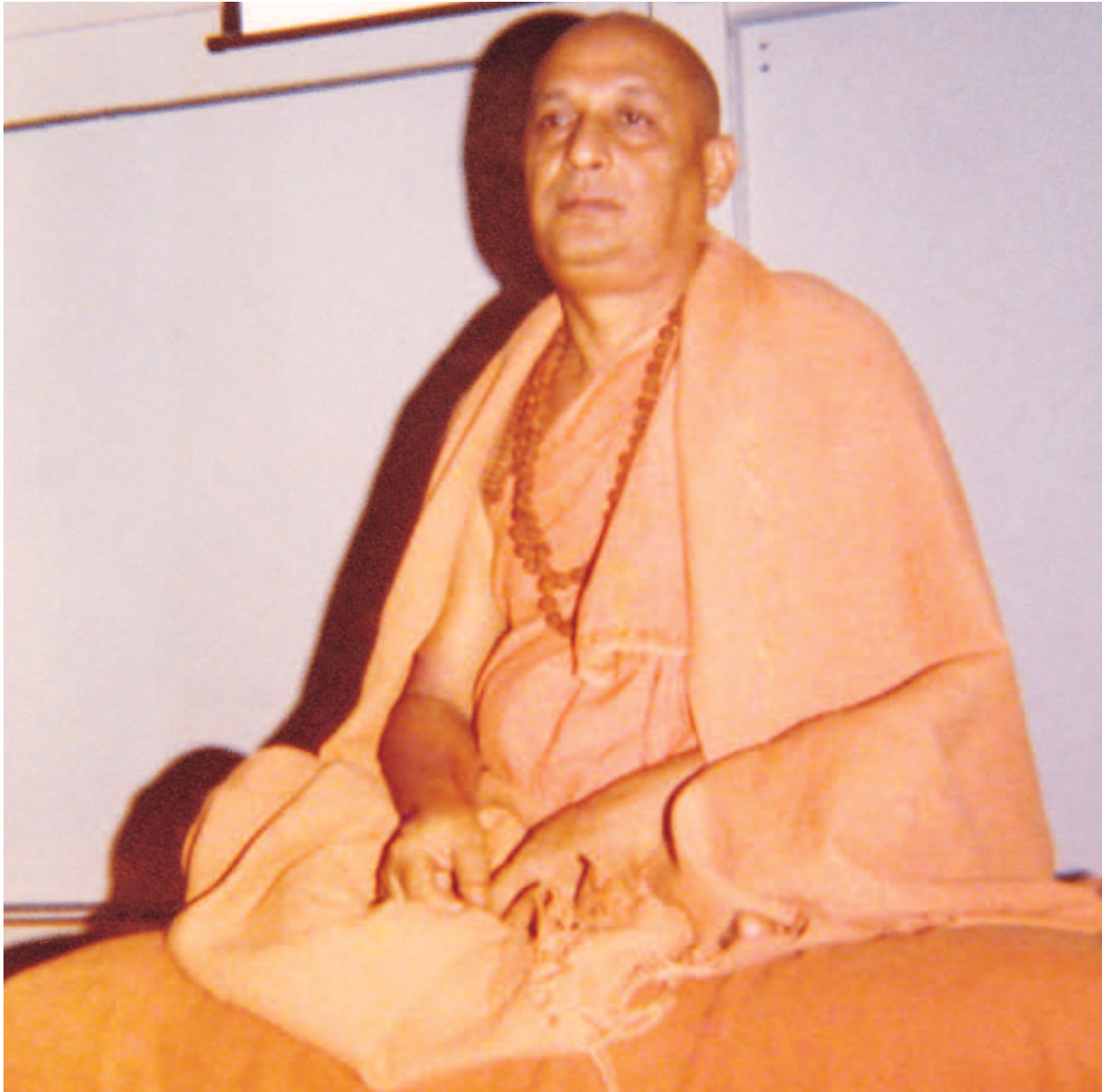
Jnana yoga and pranayama

When you practise jnana yoga, through pranayama, then it influences the central nervous system. Pranayama is a practice in which you breathe in, you then retain the breath, and then you breathe out. Many teachers in European countries translate pranayama as 'breathing exercise', and say that, by pranayama, you inhale more oxygen. But I tell you, as an authority, and I've done a lot of research and investigation, that in pranayama, you do



not take in more oxygen than when you inhale normally. Therefore, pranayama is not a breathing exercise.

Pranayama is an aid for influencing the sympathetic, parasympathetic, and autonomic nervous systems. When you breathe through the left nostril, it influences the right hemisphere of the brain. When you breathe through the right nostril, it influences the left hemisphere of the brain. When you breathe through the left nostril, the temperature is lower and, when you breathe in through the right nostril, the temperature is higher. When you



breathe through the left nostril, you achieve a lower temperature in the right hemisphere and, when you breathe in through the right nostril, you achieve a higher temperature in the left hemisphere. When you retain the breath, then you are forcing the prana, the life force, into the central nervous system. Now, the basis of jnana yoga, in medical terminology, is the sympathetic nervous system, the parasympathetic nervous system, and the central nervous system. In yogic terminology it is called ida, pingala and sushumna. In symbolism, it is the sun, the moon, and the spirit. Let us say, for the time being, the mind, the life force, and the spirit or atma.

Jnana yoga is not forcing the mind; it is not fighting with your tendencies; and it is not suppressing your thought waves; you have nothing to do with your mind as it does not come into the picture at all. You can influence the mind indirectly. How can you do this?

First of all, you should harmonize in your physical body the two forces: the mental force and prana, the vital or life force. These two forces compose my existence and everybody's existence. Imagine you have life and no mind. Just imagine you are living, but you have no mind. Or imagine that you have only life, and no mind. Again imagine that you have only mind, and no life. These are the two cosmic forces in this body.

One is called prana, the vital force, or bio-energy and not the breath, oxygen, nor the air. This prana, which you are born with, is the cosmic universal energy. It is shakti. So, let us say, prana shakti. Energy moves a motor and prana moves the body. The motor organs are moved by prana. If there is no prana you cannot see or eat, and you cannot do anything. And if there is no mind, you cannot think, hear, or coordinate. So, the mind is also another shakti. Through the practice of pranayama, the balance has to be brought about in the spheres of prana in the mind.

Dhyana yoga and siddhasana

First of all, you must know the asana, the posture, in which to practise dhyana. This is the first practical point. Some people feel that they can lie down on the bed and practise dhyana. Many people do this but, from the scientific viewpoint, this is not correct. There has to be a very important posture for dhyana yoga. Why? When you practise dhyana yoga it influences your coronary behaviour and your blood pressure. Unless you are suffering from high blood pressure, you must assume a certain asana or posture for dhyana yoga. The name of the posture is siddhasana. I'm not going to practise siddhasana now, but I'm going to explain it. In siddhasana, one heel presses the coccyx and the other heel presses the lower abdominal viscera. This is known as siddhasana. I'm not going to go into scientific details about the effect of siddhasana on the sexual energies, nor on the effect of sex hormones that excite the heart. Siddhasana is the first posture and, after siddhasana, you should practise pranayama. There are a number of pranayamas which can be used as an aid to dhyana yoga.

Dhyana yoga and fear

When some people practise dhyana yoga or meditation, the first thing they experience is fear. "What is happening to me? Why am I feeling like that?" Because you did not have the experience before. If you had it before, you would say, "Ah! it's like that." But you have not had a spiritual experience before and so you feel afraid.

The practice of pranayama used to be taught in India to young children at the age of eight or nine. But those children could not explain why they were doing these practices then. It was like religion practised nowadays. People don't understand the meaning, but still they practise it. The belief is that when a child is eight, he



should practise pranayama. After he has married and had children and reaches forty-five or so, he should devote more time to yoga and meditation.

Fear is natural. Man has a complex, self-preservation, fear complex, and this is part of him. In order to remove the fear complex, first of all, we have to be very clear that when the state of consciousness is changing, the experience will be a different one. It can't be the same. Just like you have a dream experience, it is the same with the meditation experience. A dream experience does not necessarily correlate with your day-to-day life. It can be anything. You can see elephants flying. We have never seen elephants flying, but in dreams we can see this.

Once, in a dream, you know what I did? I banged a big train and it just flew. I was a little child. So, experience is a

state of mind, and experience is a state of consciousness that comes with the awakening of the brain and the awakening of kundalini. Up to now only one portion of your brain is functioning. Nine portions of your brain are not functioning, and if they start functioning, then maybe you'll start speaking a language which you don't understand, or maybe you'll start living in a way that others might call crazy because your thoughts become different. Now, we are only talking about one area of the mind which has been brainwashed, and brainwashed and brainwashed. But what about the nine portions of the brain that are still in the dark? With the awakening of kundalini, these are the brain centres which start waking up. So your experience will be different. When you switch on the radio you hear music. The music is dependent on the radio. If there is a transistor, there will be music; if there is no transistor, there won't be music. Here the experience is dependent on an object, but there can be experience without an object. There can even be an experience without the senses. You could hear without ears, or see without eyes, as you do in dreams. In dreams you hear and see. You also walk and eat, but without a body. That is called experience without the body. Dreams are true there, and this is true here, but this is not true there. Therefore, that is not true here. Dream is a conditioned state, and this is also a conditioned state.

Your happiness or unhappiness may not survive in a dream. You are here; you are not in the dream. Therefore, neither is true. Neither is true because a truth must surpass and transcend certain limitations and barriers. I'm a swami and a sannyasin. In my dream I might marry. How could it be? It means they are two different experiences. So, with the awakening of the different centres of the brain, different experiences, different perceptions, different sensations, different forms of knowledge, different ways



of thinking, different religious attitudes, may arise that are completely different from the experiences we are having now. Or it may be that the experiences, assessments, and values of this particular part of the brain, may be completely crossed. There are many people who really don't believe in so many things, because they belong to

another area of consciousness. Awakening of kundalini is awakening of the higher centres of the brain. Since the brain cannot be awakened directly, it has to be awakened through the lower centres. Awakening of mooladhara ultimately starts awakening the centres in the brain.

—Discourse at Holiday Inn, Athens, 19 August 1979



The practice of pranayama used to be taught in India to young children at the age of eight or nine. But those children could not explain why they were doing these practices then.

The universal role of yoga in the modern era

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

In the modern structure of society man has been moving at great speed, like a motorcar racing along the road. As long as the car is all right it is not dangerous, but if something goes wrong with the car then the speed will create a disaster. Man has been thinking very fast, and the environment, the atmosphere and the general trend of world civilization exerts a compelling force on us. Our minds are totally under their influence. Therefore, it has become necessary to teach man how to conduct the affairs of the mind.

In affluent countries there are an amazing number of health problems. Why? In affluent countries where there is no poverty, where everything is comfortable, people are not able to sleep without sleeping drugs. When there is a comfortable bed, centrally-heated rooms or air-conditioned rooms, why should there be a problem with sleep? Why should there be insomnia? We can very well understand that in countries where people are beneath the poverty line, there should be anxiety, but why should there be anxiety in affluent countries? If one has nothing to eat and one has no social security, and one has no medical facilities, then there is some reason behind anxiety. But when everything is available: social security, established social system, a well-organized government, and highly sophisticated technical and medical facilities, where is the reason for anxiety? Still, statistics suggest that more cases of anxiety are reported

in affluent countries, and not in those which are below the general poverty line.

This means that the nucleus of the problem is the human mind. A mind which can think properly, which has a philosophy of its own and which is able to create a balance in different situations of life, can cope with anxieties, tensions and pressures. The purpose of initiating the project of a yoga ashram is to create a base and to provide such facilities where man may know a little more about the mind, body and himself. Within the last three hundred years we have undergone the industrial revolution. It seems that in his hectic activities man has forgotten himself. The tragedy is, the centre has been forgotten and the circumference has remained. Man is the centre of civilization; civilization cannot be the centre of man. Culture is not the centre, it is the circumference; society is not the centre, it is the circumference. Man is the centre because he has created the circumference. I am the centre and I am the nucleus, you are the nucleus. During these past centuries, man has neglected the laws that rule the body and the mind. He has not been able to create a situation which is congenial for the body-mind complex.

There was a time when the science of yoga was popular and well known all over the world. History has it that in Latin American countries, in the south of France, in Italy and Greece, in the Middle East and Afghanistan, in India and further East of India to Japan, there were many that followed the science of yoga.

Sometimes people are confused as to how yoga can fit into the materialistic structure of modern western society. Then there are people who ask how yoga can fit into the structure of occidental society. You may be occidental or oriental, materialistic or spiritual, a Hindu or a Muslim, a Christian or a Buddhist, but you are a human being first and everything else next. You have a body and you have a mind,

and the laws of the body and mind are similar. A Christian does not have Christian anger and a Hindu does not experience Hindu anger. Passion is not a Christian passion or a Hindu passion or a Muslim passion. Worry is the same. Anxiety is the same and depression is the same, neurosis is the same. The causes are the same and the symptoms are the same. If an oriental or an occidental, a Hindu or a Muslim, or a Christian were to lose his livelihood, would they react differently? No. Loss of wealth, loss of children, loss of husband or wife, loss of friend, or the achievements of these people and circumstances creates unhappiness and happiness respectively. No matter where you come from, you may be a Greek, I may be an Indian, and if I get one million dollars I won't be unhappy and if you get one million dollars you will not be unhappy. It is the natural reaction of the mind towards pain and pleasure, towards attraction and repulsion, towards desires and frustrations, towards neurosis and psychosis.

Therefore, yoga has nothing to do with oriental or occidental culture, nor with Hindu, Christian and Muslim culture, with Indian, Greek or European, with rich or poor, or with men or women. It basically has to do with the natural human being, who has a mind and a spirit. Yoga is the culture of the totality of humankind.

When I was in Russia two years ago, one of the passengers travelling with me asked, "Do I need yoga?" I said, "Do you ever feel unhappy?" He said, "Yes, often." I said, "Definitely, you do then." He didn't ask, "Do I need Hinduism?" If he had I would have said, "No." He could have asked, "Swami Satyananda, should I become a Hindu?" And I would have said, "No." But he asked, "Do I need yoga?" Yoga transcends the barriers of religion, culture, sex and political ideologies. So I said, "Yes."

—Talk at Yoga Centre, Drosopoulou Street,
19 August 1979

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. How does one become a yogi in a western country?

Paramahamsaji: In order to become a yogi, you have to do daily practices of yoga. It is necessary that you become aware of the limitations of your mind and body. Once you have realized the limitations of the body and mind, you naturally realize a greater dimension of your personality. In order to overcome the limitations of the body and mind, it is important that one knows how to handle them. The art of handling the body and mind is yoga.

Personal appointments

Throughout Swami Satyananda's visits to Greece he would always give personal appointments to people. When someone came to Swami Satyananda with any particular type of problem, he always had a remedy. He would ask them different questions about their health and physical condition, even though he understood what was going on without the questions. He would give them some sadhana or practice but, to my mind, the seed for the cure was planted in the meeting. The healing process started there and, although he may have suggested to someone to continue with yoga in order to free themselves from their ills, the healing process really started as soon as Swami Satyananda said the words in the devotee's presence. The following are examples of this, when some people approached Swami Satyananda after a satsang, and he explained and resolved the real cause behind the illness.

—Swami Sivamurti

Q. Swami Satyananda, this is Mr and Mrs Nikolaidis. They asked especially to see you. Mrs Nikolaidis would like to discuss her son's progress with yoga therapy.

Paramahamsaji: He is feeling better, eh? What has he been practising?

Q. He started to practise pawanmuktasana but he wasn't able to continue with it. He is doing yoga nidra at home.

Paramahamsaji: That helped him?

Q. That helped him and then he started coming to the ashram. We came together for yoga nidra.

Paramahamsaji: I shall give him some pranayamas to do as well.

Q. Can you help my relative here with his kidneys? He doesn't practise yoga at the moment.

Paramahamsaji: When someone has a faulty kidney, or a kidney infection, then he has various symptoms. One of them is high blood pressure. It could eventually lead to damage of the coronary system. Therefore, kidney complaints should not be treated in a light-hearted way. Firstly, diet therapy can help; then, yoga therapy; and, third, maybe homeopathy. With these three forms of therapy he will be able to help himself. Diet, yoga, homeopathy, these are the three forms of therapy he has to practise.

Q. Is it possible to do a diagnosis? The doctors are not sure what is wrong. They think the blood pressure is a result of kidney malfunction.

Paramahamsaji: Did they put him on dialysis?

Q. No, not yet.

Paramahamsaji: Just improper functioning of the kidney is all right. But the kidneys do not function on



their own. There are vital hormones in the body which feed the kidneys, and they are nutrition for the kidneys. Shashankasana is very important for him. Of course, yoga nidra has to be done, not because yoga nidra will free him from his problem, but because whenever a person is suffering from any particular disease, his mind is affected. When the mind is affected, the mind has to be treated as well as the physical problem. Whether you are suffering from blood pressure, kidney problems, coronary troubles, liver problems, meningitis, or any type of disease, you are also suffering simultaneously the effects of the disease in your mind.

If you are treating your relative's physical body, but you are not treating his mind, then he will never get better, because the sickness of the body may

be contributing to mental illness. That is called somatopsychic disease, and illness of the mind that contributes to the illness of the body is called psychosomatic disease. It works both ways. Yoga nidra is necessary for any form of disease. It does not matter if it is physical or non-physical.

Diet is also very important and it needs to be worked out by a naturopath. This is not something which I can just write down for you. A person who knows about diet has to guide him with this. What he should eat, what he should not eat, and how much he should eat.

He can stay for a day or two in the ashram so he can learn all the asanas and other practices. Then he can practise them at home. I think that should be quite enough. How much water does he drink?

Q. About two litres.

Paramahamsaji: Two litres is all right. Has he always drunk water, or only recently?

Q. Always.

Paramahamsaji: I will give him one more system of therapy that I'm not going to discuss now. There is a book called Amaroli. Let him first read the book and, after he has read the book, then he should think about practising it and, if he is convinced, then let him do it. He will see improvement in fifteen or twenty days. Complete improvement. But I'm not going to tell him what it is. Nor are you going to tell him what it is. He has to read the book himself. Especially the chapter which has been compiled on the basis of scientific investigations, because it is the scientific investigations that are important. That material is in the first chapter and in the second chapter are the instructions for practising amaroli.

It is an organic rupture. His kidney functions, in my opinion, have deteriorated by thirty five-forty per cent. That is almost half of the kidneys. Sometimes they don't respond because the necessary hormones that act as nutrients for the kidneys are either missing, or he doesn't have them. There are so many: from the prostate gland, ATCP, STCC. There are a number of hormone groups that are important for maintaining good health and efficient kidneys. He may be missing some of the hormones through some systemic fault, or because of some food, his mental habits, worrying, or from an inheritance from his parents. There are so many possible causes. Or he may be producing the hormones at a lower level and not at the level required by the kidneys. Or it may be that he is producing the



hormones, but his kidneys are not able to absorb them. Sometimes the body absorbs hormones in two or three cycles, and not in the first cycle. Most kidney diseases I have come across are mainly due to non-absorption of hormones in the first cycle.

Q. Can reflexology help?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, it does help and it gives relief. But it gives relief only when the nerve functions are involved, not these structural things. If my eyes are losing their sight, then nothing is going to help them. But, if I sometimes feel discomfort in the eyes, maybe reflexology can help me. There are the reflexes which act through the remote centres in the brain.

Q. Can it cause any harm?

Paramahamsaji: How can it be harmful?

Q. I mean perhaps making the kidneys work more, for example?

Paramahamsaji: It's not that. You see, in reflexology, the influence and effect is directed at the remote centres in the brain. Now the brain is the headquarters; it is the master. From the brain, everything is controlled, such as the kidneys, the heart, the lungs, and all of the body's systems. This brain cannot be tackled directly. There are only two ways of handling the brain. One way of handling the brain is through a remote system such as reflexology. The second way of handling the brain is kundalini yoga through pranayama. Through the practice of pranayama, or through the practice of asana, or through the practice of reflexology, it is always possible to bring desirable and positive changes in different centres of the body. But amaroli will help him very much if he is convinced.



Q. My blood pressure is always changing; sometimes up, sometimes down.

Paramahamsaji: Do you often breathe through the mouth? When you breathe through the mouth, the blood pressure must go down. If you breathe through the nose, it must rise. It is mouth breathing which is really responsible. We have seen that in dogs the temperature, blood pressure and pulses can be very erratic. It is as if

the blood pressure is racing back and forth, or up and down. This is because dogs always breathe through the mouth. Breathing through the mouth has an impact on the behaviour of the blood pressure and, gradually, when you breathe through the nose, the blood pressure will stabilize and improve.

—Satsang at the home of Mr Vasilios and Mrs Lillian Papathanassopoulou, 19 August 1979

Impressions

Distance is no barrier

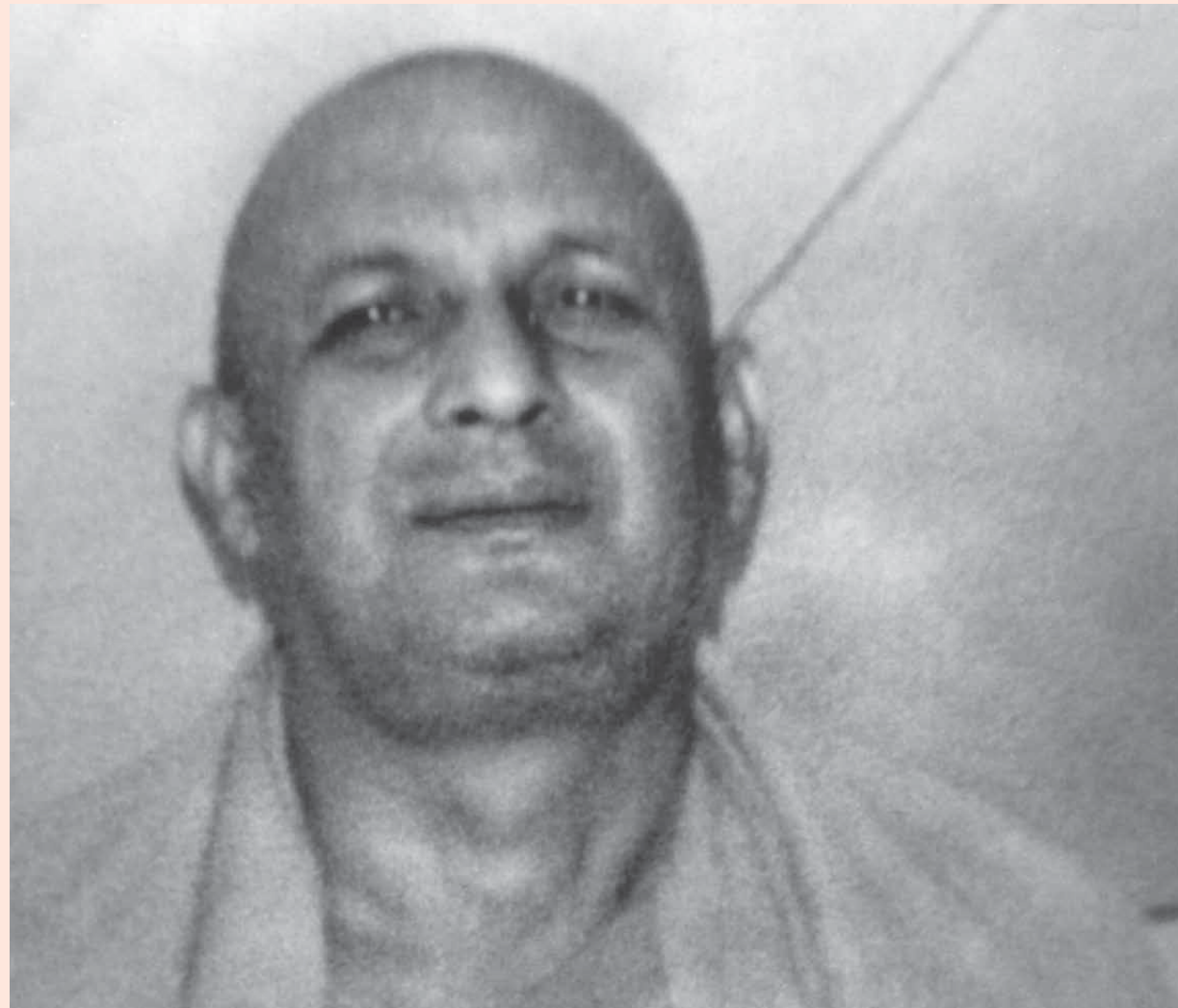
Swami Sivamurti recalls a visit to Spain with Swami Satyananda when he was asked, "How can one serve his guru if he is far away?"

A guru lives beyond time and space. Distance has no meaning for him. It just has a meaning for us. When Swami Satyananda went to Spain I was there. After arriving at the airport, he went straight to a home where he was giving satsang, and there he said to everyone, "You know I can see you all from Munger, I don't need to come here at all. Whatever has to be done, can be done from there. But I come, because you have the need." This truth struck a chord. We have the need. We, the disciples, have the need to be in the physical presence of our guru for a period of time. But for the guru it's not necessary. Swami Satyananda used to say, "You stay in your room, I stay in my room. We can communicate, we don't need to be in physical proximity."

The sublime master

Sannyasi Gambhirananda, a founding member of Satyanandashram Hellas, describes his meeting with Paramahamsaji.

He was a sublime master, truly wise in every sense of the word. With a deep penetrating look that touched my soul and overwhelmed me. Meeting him was an



auspicious event in my life that changed my way of thinking and my philosophy in relation to understanding people in depth. He was simple, unassuming and

humble, with boundless love for people, animals and nature, like Christ. I will always remember him, with all my love. He will always remain imprinted in my heart.



Swami Satyananda taking a dip in the sea outside Athens

It was a real experience

Sannyasi Sivakar describes an experience that saved her husband's life.

Often when I dreamt, I had meaningful encounters with Paramahamsaji. One of these, I believe beyond any doubt, was not a dream. It was not a trick of my mind; it was a real experience, and I will explain why.

Years ago, we were at the Onasio Hospital so that Tasos, my husband, could have a routine check-up. We were told that, as we were there, it would be good if he had a coronary angiography. "What is that?" I asked. We were told that it would give a more accurate picture of his heart condition. They also told us that there was no danger, and that it would last about an hour. I took a seat outside, waiting for the time to pass. At a certain point, I had a vision of Paramahamsaji entering the room where Tasos was, in haste. It was so real that I felt something must be happening. I was ready to open the door of the room, even though I knew they wouldn't allow me to go in. Half an hour later, the doctor said that death was avoided at the last minute. There had been a complication, and they had to do an angioplasty balloon to save him.

I will never forget this experience. Beyond any doubt, it really happened, because I was not at all worried before the procedure. Neither did I repeat my mantra, which I would have done, had I sensed there was any danger. I only realized something was happening the moment I saw Paramahamsaji entering the check-up room. I treasure this experience in my heart; a moment truly critical for Tasos' life.

Chronicles

In 1979 we were fortunate to be graced with the presence of Swami Niranjanananda in June, and Swami Satyananda in August. Swami Satyananda's second visit to Greece was in Athens, where he gave discourses in a number of devotee's homes, and Satyananda Yoga Centre at Kypseli. He gave mantra diksha, spoke on the importance of diksha initiation, and gave poorna sannyasa to one aspirant. He gave his final public discourse on 'the science of yoga'. He then continued on to the European cities of Barcelona, Antwerp, Zinal, Paris, London and Dublin. He presided over the International Yoga Convention in Dublin, Ireland.



Greek Knowers of the Truth: Homer

Homer was a legendary blind, ancient Greek poet, who was the writer of the epic poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey. Herodotus said Homer lived around 850 BCE, but other ancient sources said closer to the time of the Trojan War (c.1194–1184 BCE), and this date has the support of some recent scholars. The Iliad is the oldest work in western literature. Homer's epics influenced the entirety of ancient Greek culture, and many Greeks regarded him as their life's guide and teacher.

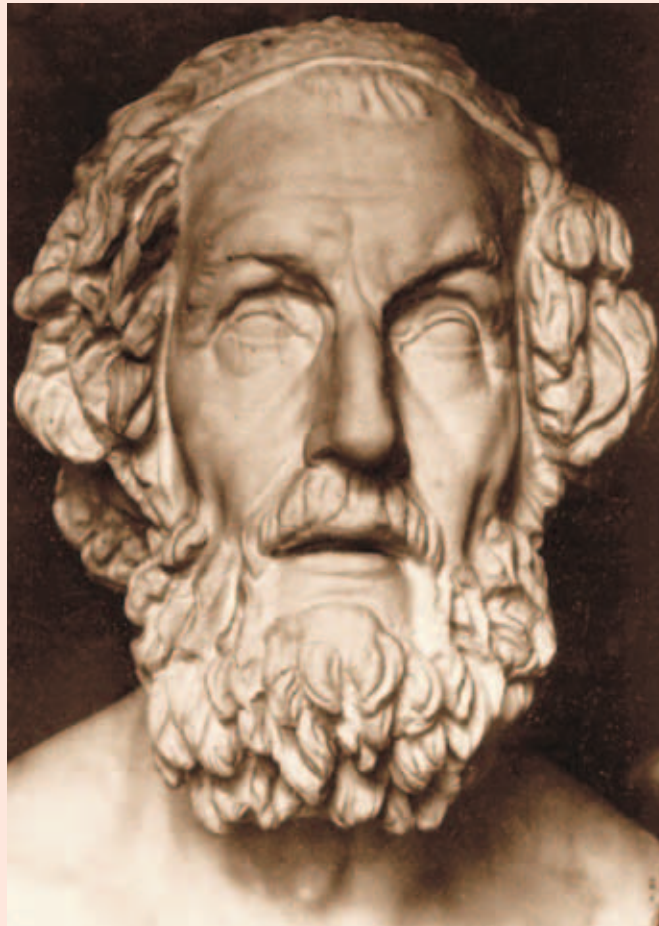
Swami Satyananda on Homer

The following quotes are excerpts from lectures given by Swami Satyananda during his tours in Greece.

- Homer wrote the Iliad. You call such works epics or mythology; we call them Puranas. We have the story of Rama. They are the same type of stories. You call it Homer's polytheism; we call it Vyasa's polytheism. In India there was a great scholar and his name was Vyasa. He was the author of the Bhagavad Gita. Hindu mythology is called the polytheism of Vyasa, and here we

have the polytheism of Homer. Polytheism is where you have the concept of many gods.

- I have studied Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, everybody. I have read all the dialogues of Plato. You see, Greek mythology and Hindu mythology are similar. In Greek



mythology, Homer has also included the classic of the Ramayana. The great king Rama, his wife Sita, they are part of Greek mythology. Greek mythology has so many references to Indian classics, especially the concept of Surya, the sun god, with the horses. The concept of Saraswati, the goddess of learning is the same and, of course, you know the concept of Cupid or Kamadeva is the same.

- The history and the culture of the Greek people bears witness that yoga was not unknown to Greeks in the past. We know that as far back as Socrates and what he used to say about "Know thyself", is the central theme of yoga philosophy. However, in the course of time, accidents in history made the Greek people forget their ancient links with yoga. We can even say that the traditional heretics emanated from Greece, the swamis or the people who were able to go beyond the body and mind. They were also known as cynics. I also have to make a reference to Greek mythology: Homer's polytheism, and the many gods. These gods and goddesses of Homer were nothing but the symbols of the mental and spiritual stages of man.

Sayings by Homer:

- Zeus does not bring all men's plans to fulfilment. —Iliad
- All men have need of the gods. —Odyssey



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Day-by-Day Itinerary

- Swami Satyananda visited Greece for the third time at the beginning of his 1980 European tour. He conducted a three-day lecture program in Athens.



Satsang at the home of Mr Vasilios and Mrs Lillian Papathanassopoulou

Tuesday, 29 April

- A discourse delivered on 'Tantra and Yoga' at Satyanandashram Kypseli (Athens).
- Another discourse on 'Yoga for the 1980s' delivered at the Dionyssios Areopagitis Hall, Athens. The Professor of Sociology, Dr Dimitris Goutas, introduced Swami Satyananda to an enthusiastic audience. The evening was extremely popular, with a gathering of approximately eight hundred people.

Wednesday, 30 April

- A satsang with scientists, doctors, and psychiatrists at a devotee's home in Athens. Over fifty doctors attended and organizers were impressed with the interest shown and the profound and philosophical questions posed to Swami Satyananda.
- Another satsang at Satyanandashram Kypseli (Athens).

Swami Satyananda spoke on tantra and married life, reincarnation, and desire. The yoga centre was filled to overflowing.

- A discourse on 'The Awakening Power of Yoga' at the Dionyssios Areopagitis Hall, Athens. The professor of sociology, Dr Dimitris Goutas again introduced Swami Satyananda to newcomers for this much-anticipated second lecture.

Thursday, 1 May

- A satsang on mantra diksha and meditation, at Satyanandashram Kypseli (Athens). Two aspirants were initiated into poorna sannyasa.
- A satsang at the home of Mr Vasilios and Mrs Lillian Papathanassopoulou.
- Press interview at Satyanandashram Kypseli entitled 'A Great Yogi Visits Greece'.

From the Media

A great yogi visits Greece

An article by Stef Mes, in Vima newspaper,
1 May 1980.

Swami Satyananda Paramahansa made a stop in Athens as part of his European tour to teach the Athenians a little serenity through yoga.

The Indian teacher, small in stature, sat cross-legged on embroidered cushions and with a calm gaze said, "It is easy for almost anyone to become a yogi, as long as they first want to perceive the power of the mind and the limitations of the body. What you acquire with regular practice is nothing more than the ability to have self-control of the conscious, as well as the subconscious and unconscious mind, but you do not achieve this from one day to the next."

Q. What is the message of your philosophy?

Paramahansa: Self-knowledge, above all. As Socrates said, "Know thyself". The contemporary person cannot communicate with their body and mind. They are constantly subject to tension, futility, disappointment and disillusionment. Yoga is a method of balance and clarity. It can answer the questions surrounding the anguish of existence.

Q. What are the practical applications of yoga on our lives?

Paramahansa: "For those involved in business and politics, yoga offers relaxation and mental invigoration, and to all people it will bring peace, contentment and



Swami Satyananda and students posing for the newspaper photographer

health. Yoga, strange as it may seem, can have an effect on the development of an illness.

Still, we have to change the initial perception of yoga from a superficial one to a real one. Initially, in the West, yoga was only practised to acquire a beautiful body, but now yoga is practised for development of our whole consciousness, for self-knowledge, which a person of our times needs more than anything else.

"Yoga will become tomorrow's culture and will show a new way of life to humankind."

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

|| *Yoga will become
tomorrow's culture and
will show a new way of
life to humankind.* ||

The Awakening Power of Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

When I came to your country the last time, I was not expecting to repeat my visit so quickly. In fact, my present visit will cover almost thirty countries in Europe. I have undertaken this visit in order to promote a great conference that is going to take place in Colombia, South America. In 1972, when I established an ashram in Bogota we did not expect that we would receive such great assistance from people. Not only the masses, but even the Church came forward generously to help us spread the message of yoga throughout the country.

The people of that country are so devoted to yoga that it is not possible for me to convey the different attitudes they have. There are thousands upon thousands all over the country, in every village. We have conducted yoga seminars, yoga conferences, and extensive yoga classes, in universities, prison houses, colleges, monasteries, convents, and communities for priests.

International yoga convention Colombia

This year, in October, we will be conducting a great conference in Bogota known as a 'Health Festival'. This festival, which will be celebrated over four days, will be attended by people from every country and every walk of life, and I have undertaken this present trip in order to invite you and everybody to that festival.

It is not only this festival, which is a very important event for me to invite you to, but there is something more. South America in general and Colombia in particular,

had a very rich yoga culture sometime in the past. In the southern provinces of Colombia, there are villages, forests, desolate places, where you have stone carvings depicting the yoga kriyas. These stone carvings, which can be found extensively in that country, depict some of the most fantastic things, like asanas from hatha yoga and the practices of kriya yoga. I have tried to visit those places and I'm simply wonderstruck at how this great culture, this great science, was known to them. In historical times, India, Africa and South America were connected by land routes through Atlantis and Lemuria.

We decided that the conference should be dedicated to human health. Yoga has immediate relevance to the problems of human health. We have always thought in terms of disease when we think about health but, apart from the remedy of the disease, there are other forms of health that we have to consider. Mental health is a very important factor in human life and if you carefully study the science of yoga, you will find that it is a complete science in itself. It does not merely take care of the disease, but it takes care of man himself. In historical days, people had great respect for yoga and did the practices but today, we need yoga more than ever. You know very well that we have become restless, and man has lost his peace of mind. We have distanced ourselves greatly from tranquillity and equipoise, resulting in many abnormal diseases. When the mind becomes sick, the body is adversely affected. When the mind is worried, restless, or disturbed, it is not an ordinary thing. Each and every thought has an impact on the biological activities in the physical body. The bodily conditions affect the mind and the mental conditions affect the body.

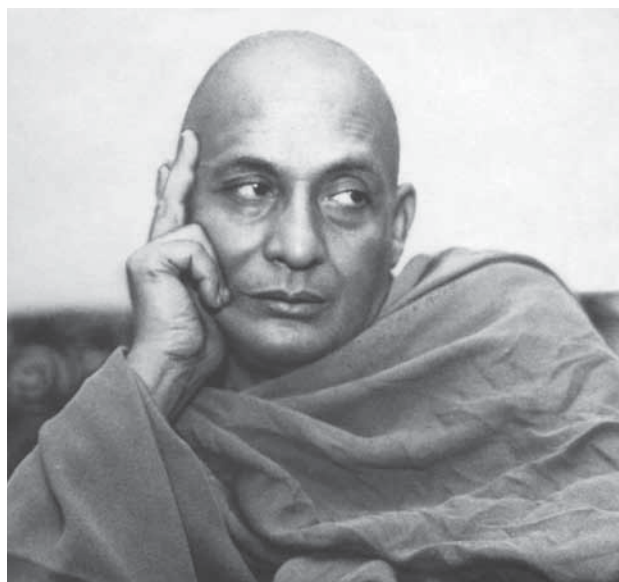
Yoga in prisons

In the good old days, the physical conditions used to affect the mind but nowadays, the mental conditions are affecting the body. Diseases like cancer, diabetes,

Handbill advertising Swami Satyananda's lectures in Athens, 29 April - 1 May 1980

rheumatism, peptic ulcers, etc. are definitely physical in nature but remember that all these diseases have their origin somewhere deep in human nature and the human mind. Unless we are able to train the mind, unless we are able to train the behaviour, the attitude and the personality, how can medicine or anything else help mankind to eliminate these diseases? This is precisely the reason why man himself has come to rediscover yoga in our century. When you are thirsty, you search for water; when you are hungry, you search for food; and, when your mind is out of gear, you search for yoga. This discovery has an absolute relevance to man's present state of health.

Last year, we received an invitation from a big prison house in America, San Quentin. It is the biggest known prison house and we were invited by the authorities to train and initiate their inmates into yoga. A man who commits a crime is a sick man. Unless your mind is sick, you can do no wrong, therefore man's behaviour should



be interpreted in terms of his health and sickness. I cannot say that you are a bad man. I won't say that you are an evil person. I will only say, "Poor sick man!" Is crime not an unhealthy state of man's mind? Is a criminal not unhealthy? That is the concept of health in yoga and, of course, a swami is giving the classes. Observations will be made regarding what is happening during the practices of yoga. When you practise pranayama, what happens to the brain waves? When you practise asanas, what happens to the glands and endocrine secretions? When you practise the headstand pose, what amount of oxygen is consumed? This is just a glimpse into how yoga can maintain a constant balance of health in the human frame.

Drug rehabilitation

Side-by-side with this, another project has been initiated with the help of the same swami. This is an experiment in a drug rehabilitation centre. Yoga has a peculiar science and background. We are talking about a particular gland at the top of the spinal cord. That is known as the pineal gland in medical science and in yoga we call it ajna chakra. Above that gland, there is another small centre, which is vital. Through the voluntary processes of meditation and pranayama, we try to control and activate these centres. Whether you commit a crime, or you are addicted to drugs, the cause is somewhere else. Society alone cannot be blamed. You cannot even blame the people who are trying to make you into either a criminal or a drug addict. The problem is a result of an imbalance in the endocrine system in the physical body.

Yoga and health

When we talk about yoga and health, we are talking about a completely strange and unique science. There are twofold forces in this physical body. Just as you have two forms of energy with electricity: one negative



Swami Satyananda before the lecture at the hall in Dionysus Aeropagitis Street, Athens, 30 April 1980

pole of energy, and one positive pole of energy, in the same way, in this physical body, there are two flows of energy, and these flows are the mental force and the vital force. The mental force represents all the phenomena of consciousness, and the vital force represents all the phenomena of existence and mobility. Consciousness, plus vitality, is life and existence. Within the framework of the spinal column, these two energies flow like high-tension cables. One force flows on the left side, the other force flows on the right side, and both these flows emanate from the root of the spinal column. These forces have centres or junctions, from where they branch out to each and every part of the body and thus, there is life and mobility in every part of the body. When there is imbalance between the mental force and the vital force, when disharmony is created between the mental force and the vital force, then diseases originate.

Therefore, what we do in yoga is restore the balance and harmony, and coordination between these great forces. In yoga, the vital force is known as prana, and the

mental force is known as chitta. These two forces have to be brought under control with the practices of hatha yoga and raja yoga. Physical hatha yoga, which you practise every day, is not just simple exercise, because the asanas, the so-called exercises, are working on the energy levels, and this is a peculiar concept.

Do not think of this body as a bundle of flesh, bones, marrow, and blood. This body is nothing but energy-permeated substance, and this energy operates at different levels of man's existence. Sometimes, this energy is low, and sometimes it becomes excessive. When you practise meditation, you are trying to equalize the quantum of energy in every sphere of your body and mind. When you practise pranayama, you are not distributing the prana, as you do in meditation, but you are creating the energy, and this is a very important aspect. Apart from asana, pranayama, and meditation, there is a very powerful form of yoga known as kundalini yoga. In the past, scholars, doctors and people generally, used to think that the awakening of kundalini was a psychosis. However, nowadays, the great scholars of our times, psychologists and doctors, have made a clear distinction between kundalini awakening and schizophrenic or psychotic behaviour.

The higher mind

Kindly listen with attention to the yoga of the new age. Man has already outgrown his material philosophy, and is beginning to think that he is much more than what is known and what is seen. We have also understood that this present state of mind is not the ultimate state of mind. We can transform and transmute this present state of mind to any extent, to any degree. This mind is not the true mind. This mind is a combination, a collaboration of consciousness and the sensory impressions. It is very limited. If you cut off the sensory



communications, the mind will be paralyzed. Isolate the mind, and see what happens.

If, however, you can develop the mind behind the mind, then you can never isolate it. In the science of kundalini yoga, this mind is replaced by a greater mind, because this mind cannot serve our life's purpose any more. It has awful limitations. Despite everything that we have, this mind still feels unhappy. Even if you give it everything, it will never be satisfied.

The higher mind is known as the 'super mind', or otherwise the 'spiritual Self' and it has to be awakened with the practices of kriya yoga. Of all the sciences known to us, kriya yoga is the most powerful practice for the awakening of kundalini. The location of kundalini is at the base of the spinal column. You practise pranayama and direct the force into the spinal column which in turn influences the consciousness of man. This awakening of

kundalini may put us in touch with other dimensions. Then one is not just a man, but becomes the man behind the man, and the mind behind the mind. The purpose of human existence is to discover and awaken that. You can be sure of one thing that when you are able to develop the higher consciousness in you, then you will experience a completely different version of life and creation, and you will no longer be an ordinary human being.

What has been presented here is only a glimpse. This science is accessible to those who practise it. Even if you practise a little, it will help you a lot. It does not take hours, it takes minutes. If you can devote just ten minutes a day of your precious life, you will realize, in time to come, that you have made a very worthwhile investment.

Do not think of this body as a bundle of flesh, bones, marrow, and blood. This body is nothing but energy-permeated substance, and this energy operates at different levels of man's existence.

Questions and Answers

Q. How can yoga practices help us get rid of our ego and teach us humility?

Paramahansaaji: Egotism does not vanish all of a sudden, and humility does not appear over night. They can be achieved by constant vigil, and by constant effort. Through the practise of yoga asanas, you prepare yourself for pranayama and, through the practice of pranayama, you



Swami Satyananda during a lecture, Dionysius Areopagitis Centra, Athens, 30 April, 1980



Swami Satyananda being introduced by Dr. Dimitris Goutas, at the hall in Dionysius Areopagitis Centra, Athens, 30 April, 1980

prepare yourself for meditation. In meditation you are able to visualize the ego and then it can be exterminated.

Q. You said that man cannot work without the senses. How then did Helen Keller manage to learn so many things?

Paramahansaaji: Your question is about a particular person who was a genius. You should rather ask about the mental patients in the mental hospitals. Geniuses and yogis can see without eyes, and can hear without ears. I was referring to the average person, because the mind of an average human being is very limited and incapable. It is an incompetent substance. At night, when the senses are withdrawn, do you know what happens to the mind? It begins to dream of flying elephants. That is the competence of an isolated mind of the average human being. Helen Keller, Einstein,

Newton, Shankaracharya, and many others had special brains. Their brains were the outcome of lifetimes of effort.

Q. Does yoga, as a technique, have anything to do with religion? Is it a religion? If it's not a religion, why is initiation required?

Paramahansaaji: Yoga is a science. Even if you don't believe it but you practise it, it will give you exact results. You can question and examine everything on yoga. Every item of yoga can be challenged. Science is open-minded, and is always discovering new areas of truth, just like yoga. In the last century, many features of yoga were unacceptable, because the scientific investigations then were not objective.

Now, concerning initiation, for me the word 'initiation' does not mean a religious system of consecration or

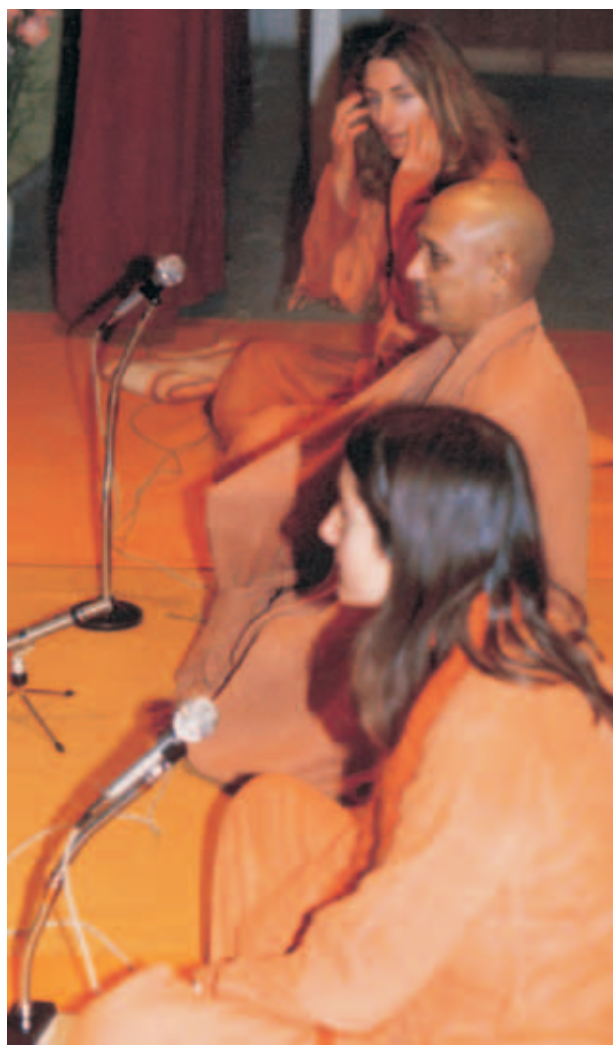
ceremony. Initiation is an English word and, whenever you initiate something, you begin something; that is initiation. You can initiate some work, a movement, anything. Initiation here does not mean a kind of ritual or ceremony; it is the beginning of something.

Q. Which force flows on the right side of the spine and which on the left? What are the names of the flows?

Paramahansa: The mental force flows to the left, and the pranic, or vital force, flows to the right. That is the position at the base, but there are junctions along the spinal column where they cross each other. The first junction is in the sacral plexus, the second junction is in the solar plexus, the third junction is at the cardiac plexus, and the fourth junction is at the cervical plexus. The terminus is in the medulla oblongata. At every junction these two forces, the nadis, cross each other. In yoga the name of the mental force is ida, and the name of the pranic force is pingala. The mental force, ida, flows through the left nostril, and the prana, or pingala, flows through the right. Research has shown that the left nostril has a lower temperature than the right. It has also shown that when the right nostril is closed or blocked, and the left is flowing, then the right hemisphere of the brain is active. Similarly, when the left nostril is blocked and the right is flowing, then the left hemisphere of the brain is active. It has also been established that when both nostrils are flowing and neither of them is blocked, the entire brain is active. It has also been observed that man's behaviour is not the same in these three cases.

Q. Since the average man's mind cannot cope, wouldn't it be unfair for him to eliminate his ego? Perhaps faith could also help?

Paramahansa: Nature has created ego for subsistence of man's existence, therefore we should not be in a



hurry to assassinate this useful factor of life. Rather than eliminate the ego, we should try to make the best use of it, and the best path for this is the path of bhakti yoga.

—Discourse and satsang at Dionyssios Areopagitis Hall,
Athens, 30 April 1980

Yoga is a science. Even if you don't believe it, but you practise it, it will give you exact results. You can question and examine everything on yoga.

Every item of yoga can be challenged. Science is open-minded, and is always discovering new areas of truth, just like yoga. In the last century, many features of yoga were unacceptable, because the scientific investigations then were not objective.

SATSANG

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

At Satyanandashram, Athens, 30 April 1980 (previously unpublished).

Q. In the book *Tantra and Married Life*, the question was asked, “How can one perform their family duties in a detached way?” The answer refers to Shiva as the silent witness, and Shakti as energy and creativity. It implies that the natural way is for man to remain detached, and woman to have the active role. Where does this leave woman’s detachment in family life? I think she needs it even more than man.

Paramahansaaji: According to the tantric tradition, it is the woman who is more important than the man. In family life, they are known as man and woman. In the universal realm, they are known as Shiva and Shakti. In this physical body, they are known as ida and pingala. Who is important, and who is not important, is not the question. Both have important roles to play. Mind cannot exist without life, and life is useless without mind. If you have a man who is living, but has no mind, or if you have a mind, but you have no life, it will not work. It is the same in the family. Man and woman are both important. But woman, the Shakti aspect, is very important, because she is very close to spiritual awareness. Nature has endowed woman with emotional superiority, while man is fundamentally and primarily intellectual. It does not mean that man is not emotional, but he is predominantly intellectual.

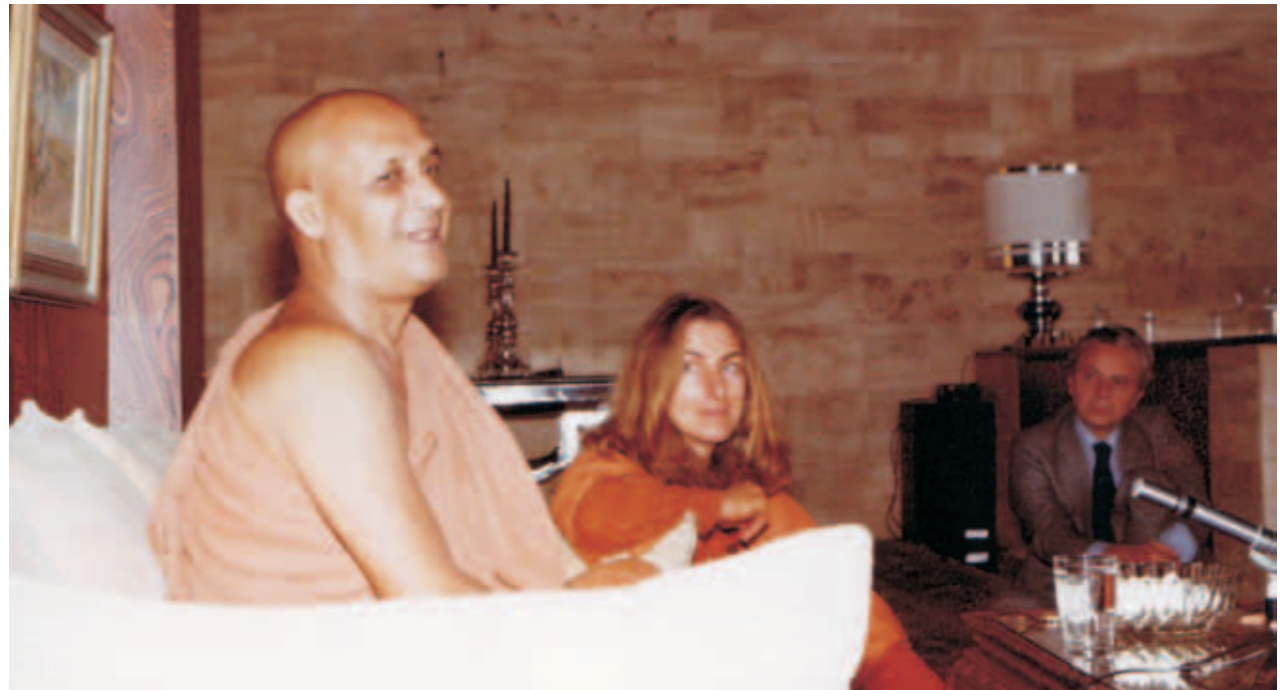
In the path of yoga, and in the path of spiritual life, it is the emotion that is the powerful vehicle. Faith subsists on emotion, and not on the intellect. If you have no emotion,

then faith cannot become stable. That is why women are spiritual, and can be spiritually superior to man. Man is intellect, and woman is emotion, and both are necessary to live a complete life. In the same way, in family life also, a woman’s participation has to be more active than a man’s, because she needs more expression than a man. Man, being extroverted by nature, sometimes ignores the emotional and substantial needs of the woman. Not only now, but throughout the centuries, man has only enjoyed woman. All throughout history, man has only used woman.

There has not been a culture where woman was given a distinct spiritual place. A woman can become a wife, but cannot become a priest. A woman can become a prostitute, but cannot become a pope. She can play in a nightclub, but

she cannot be a swami. Man and society have not behaved in a just manner. Only in tantra is the woman’s place first, and her place is the place of a spiritual Self. Whether it is in spiritual instruction, or the sexual act, she is superior. She is not a tool. According to tantra, man and woman represent the two great forces in nature, just as matter and energy are combined when creation takes place. Keep in mind that man and woman does not necessarily mean husband and wife. It can also mean father and daughter, brother and sister, or guru and disciple.

Q. In the past, sexual intercourse induced a sense of guilt and shame, but this is not so common nowadays. In married life, should a yogic-minded person try to persuade their partner to practise vajroli or sahajoli, or





should they comply with their partner's wishes and not change anything in their sex life?

Paramahamsaji: There are four basic urges in man's life. These basic urges are common to both man and animal. One is food, two is sleep, three is fear, and four is sexual activity. These four are common to both, but when we become intelligent human beings, there is some kind of reprogramming regarding the whole situation. In reference to the question, sexual life need not, or should not, be conducted in the same way as with animals.

The tantric tradition proclaims that the sexual act has a threefold purpose: the first purpose is progeny; the second purpose is pleasure; and the third purpose is spiritual experience. Now, the act is not important; the purpose becomes important. Animals indulge in the sexual act neither for progeny, nor for pleasure, and not

for self-experience. They indulge in it instinctively, but we have to separate from this instinct. Progeny is a very common purpose of the sexual act of humanity and, in so far as pleasure is concerned, we understand that man has this attitude in his mind. The proclamation of tantra, however, is that, as enlightened human beings, you should transmute your sexual act for a spiritual purpose.

In order to experience samadhi, you don't have to indulge in the sexual act. Be very clear on this point, it is very important. But since you are human beings, you have your natural urges. You can't escape, you can't avoid, and you can't control it. Therefore, you should try to make use of this act for spiritual elevation. Suppression of the sexual urge is dangerous. Abstention is only for a few. Most human beings will follow the laws of nature, so normally, people should not talk about brahmacharya, chastity and

continence, because celibacy is meant only for very few people. For most people, the way is very clear, but we are concerned about something else. The question is: "Is it possible for a human being to have spiritual experiences, without refraining from sexual life? Or, is it necessary to abandon sexual life, if you want a spiritual life? Do you have to choose one or the other?"

Tantra says that in order to attain samadhi, you do not have to abandon your natural life. So, what do you do? Tantra says, "Live the natural life, but the experience should be internalized. The experience which you get on a sensual level, the experience which you get on a mental level, should become deeper in effect. The result of this natural act should be a spiritual tranquillity, a spiritual equipoise." If this does not happen, then guilt is bound to arise. It will not come immediately after the act, but it will come after a few years. This guilt is bound to come; you can't escape it because, for many hundreds of years, religions have been telling you, "This is bad. This is bad. This is bad." This is how you have been indoctrinated for centuries. Your brain has been permeated with the idea, "This is a sin." Therefore, the guilt is bound to come, but not immediately, after some years, maybe ten, twenty, or thirty years. This guilt sometimes comes in a concealed way and affects our behaviour as well.

Tantra is of the opinion that everybody who is leading this natural life must lead it with respect and dignity. No philosophy, no religion is speaking the truth if they say that this natural act is a sin. As long as you are a human being, you follow the laws of nature. Sleep is one of the important urges of nature. If I write a book and state that sleeping is a sin, what will happen to you? Someone will sleep, but then tell me, "Paramahamsaji, I'm not sleeping." This is called hypocrisy. This is called betrayal of your own self. Then you make a law in the parliament that

whoever sleeps must be punished for three years. What will I do? I will sleep in my room and a policeman will come. I will give him fifty dollars and say, "Hey, I did not sleep." Nature's laws are compulsory. Why does nature compel you to this? What is the purpose of the sexual act? Have you ever thought about it? It is a tool for evolution. The body produces hormones. They have to be absorbed, assimilated, and metabolized. If you don't metabolize them, they will create a poisonous effect throughout the body.

Therefore, your forefathers, your ancestors, created a system called 'man and woman living together'. It was to secure the health of humanity. If they were not allowed this chance, if they were not allowed to come together, perhaps humanity would not exist today. This physical body emits poisonous chemicals into the system and they have to be expelled. It is only after considerable practice of yoga that this body stops producing poisons. So, according to tantra, all people should have a sense of respect, and an attitude of dignity. As you consider eating, as you consider sleeping, so should you consider the act of sexual interaction? In order to deepen your meditation, you must learn how to do the yogic practices of vajroli and sahajoli. Then, your married life will be a means; it will become supplementary and helpful, and make your meditation deeper and more profound.

Q. How can we help people who are very close to us (family, friends, lovers) if they need help, but do not want to be helped?

Paramahamsaji: Send them spiritual currents. The mind can move out of the brain like a fluid. It is a very dangerous science. The mind can move out like a flood of light, but only when the mind becomes completely free. Mental freedom means that in your mind there is only one thought at any one time. Only then is the mind capable of moving out. The

mind has no distance. What you think here, can go around the whole earth a number of times in one second. Mental space is different from physical space, but then you need a mind which is capable of emitting its influence. If you transmit this on the grounds of your personal attachment to somebody, it doesn't work. If you want to help others, the best thing is to help them through the mind, and not by admonishing them, or not by coaxing them, or not by convincing them.

Q. How can I live a happy, healthy life without anxiety, and with good intentions towards others?

Paramahamsaji: It is not so easy for me to tell you how to live a complete life. If it was that easy, then many people



would be very happy. Frankly speaking, it is very difficult to handle life. Please do not misunderstand that I'm talking about myself. I know how to handle it but, as we see, it is very difficult for people to handle life. We do not know how to think; we do not know what to feel and what not to feel, but we are not to be blamed for that. If you take your child of eight and give him a question of trigonometry, he won't be able to understand anything. In the same way, we poor fellows cannot understand what life is, because our minds are not at that level. So, the best solution I have in mind is, before you try to behave better in life, you should try to improve the quality of your mind. In other words, it is not important for me, or for you, to think about how to deal with the situations of life, but it is most essential for you, and for me, to improve the quality of the mind. If the quality of the mind improves, then you are able to tackle the problems. So, going back to the example: you gave a trigonometry exercise to your child which he could not manage, but as he went through schooling and studied further, he was finally able to solve the problem.

Q. What is the purpose of this universe?

Paramahamsaji: I don't know. There are a few naughty questions and this is one of them. Why did God create? No answer. This question has been put time and time again in philosophy, and I think, somewhere, we have made a mistake. The mistake is that we try to explain dreams. In Australian tribes there is a story which explains this. One member went to the leader of his tribe and said, "Sir, my neighbour stole my chicken last night." The leader summoned the neighbour and asked him, "Hey, why did you steal his chicken?" But the neighbour denied it. Then the man said, "Did you not steal my chicken in my dream?" The accused kept quiet; so the leader said, "Okay, put him in jail." This is how the whole drama has been happening.

The reality of the whole universe is a relative concept. In the absolute realm nothing exists, nothing is happening; time and space only bring an illusion of matter. There is no object, there is no matter, just time and space are creating that illusion. If you separate time and space, there is no matter. Therefore, we will have to judge your question from this point of view.

Q. Do we continue to reincarnate forever? Does the cycle keep repeating itself?

Paramahamsaji: No. When man arrives at the end of his evolution, he leaves the circuit of reincarnation. Rebirth comes to an end when the personal self, the personal ego, is merged into universal consciousness. You take a few seeds of black grain and sow them in the ground; they will germinate. Again you take a handful of them, and fry them and sow them; they will not germinate. As long as there is potency in us, we will reincarnate. When there is no desire, there is no rebirth

Q. You said before that when desire stops, then life stops. Then it follows that all desires must be satisfied in order to progress. Is this correct?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, they must be fulfilled. Desire is a very dynamic state of mind and a very creative affair. It is not an ordinary wish like “I want to go to the market and purchase vegetables”, or “I want to go out to the swimming pool.” No. Desires are threefold, and these threefold desires are insatiable, because one desire gives rise to another desire, and it makes man completely dependent on desire. Even if you could live without that desire, you have become so dependent on it, that you still desire it. I know that it is the nature of the mind to desire, but there are many forms of desires which are

limited to time and circumstances. Man’s most important desire is pleasure. Whether pleasure through children, or pleasure through property and money, or pleasure through friends, or a wife and husband; they are all different forms of pleasure. If you go on adding desire on top of desire, there comes a time when you reach a dead end. Then a moment comes when that desire will not leave us, but we will leave this body. So, one has to

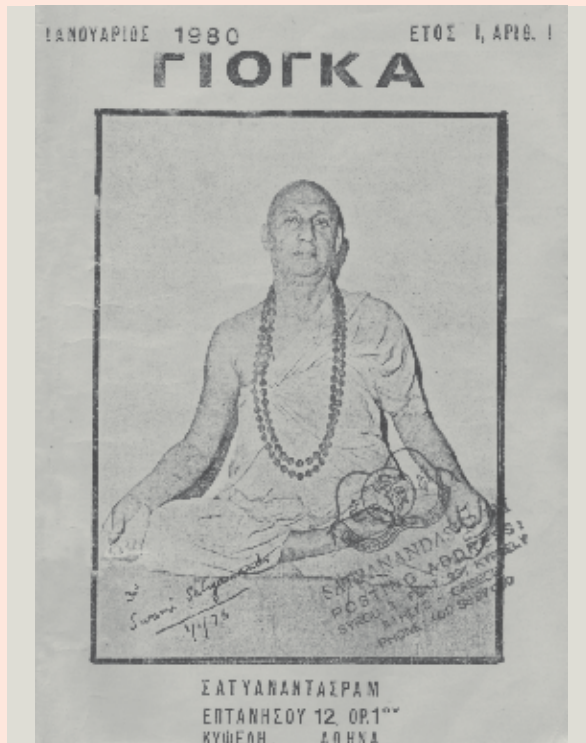


ponder on this philosophy of desires in order to better the conditions of life. Sensual pleasures are repetitions. They are slavery and a reflex condition. The moment one gets up in the morning, he remembers, “Tea, bed and tea.” It is not a desire; it is a conditioning. In the same way, we have conditioned ourselves and so we desire. What one should do is try to make a distinction between desires and conditions, or habits and relations. Then you will realize that you have very, very few desires.

Q. I believe in reincarnation, and that people with whom we have been friends in the past, are people we meet in this life in another physical form. Is it possible to meet someone from the past and identify them? Connect the past physical form with the present physical form?

Paramahamsaji: It is possible, but it has its dark side also. That is why nature has closed this possibility for common man. If I suddenly recognize you in relation to a past life, or someone else in relation to my past life, it could be harmful. You may have been a friend in my past life, and the other person may have murdered my daughter. Therefore, references to past lives are out of man’s reach. You may say that the mind is conditioned on account of man’s peculiar nature. If one develops into sainthood then for him a friend, an enemy or a lover are alike; benefactors and plunderers are both alike because, to him, everything is revealed. Then there is no harm. If you are a saint, and if you come to know we had a good relationship in the past, and the other person had done great harm to you in your past life, you will just scoff at it. Nature has conditioned man’s mind, not only in relation to the future, but also the past. This is the greatest blessing that we have. Otherwise, only God knows what would have happened.

—Satsang at Satyanandashram, Athens, 30 April 1980



First Yoga Magazine in Greek

The first Greek Yoga magazine was published in 1980. It provided a new means to share ideas, communicate and spread the light of yoga throughout

Greece. Its purpose was to help each person to realize and unleash the vast potential that lies dormant within. For many people in Greece who were new to yoga, this was one of their first glimpses of Swami Satyananda's message of yoga in their own language.

The Greek Yoga magazine opened the door of yoga to everyone. It contained news and information on tours and yoga classes conducted throughout Greece. The magazine featured articles translated from the Yoga magazine published in India, together with articles written by Swami Sivamurti and others. The magazine was hugely popular, and provided much inspiration to yoga students. The magazine was published monthly by Satyanandashram, and printed on a small mimeograph machine. All editing, translating, compiling, printing, binding and dispatch were done by the resident swamis and students of Satyanandashram Greece.

Impressions

The reader of minds

Swami Sivamurti recalls some of her seva yoga experiences with Paramahamsaji during her time at the Bihar School of Yoga.

I recall a time in Munger: we were cleaning around Paramahamsaji's kutir and this person, with whom I was doing seva yoga, had the tendency to ask me many questions. Sometimes she asked very awkward questions and expected answers to them. I was focused on my tasks of sweeping and cleaning the area around Paramahamsaji's kutir, and wanted to do this in silence, as I found that, when I was around Paramahamsaji's



Swami Bhajanananda translating for Swami Satyananda

presence, it would bring out revelations in me, and deep experiences. Anyway, this other person insisted on asking questions although, in my opinion, she had no real right to. The thought that had run through my mind then was that she had absolutely no sense of timing.

“She has no sense of consideration for another person. She is just too caught up in her own world.” As these thoughts were racing through my mind and, as I was inwardly wishing that she would just be quiet and shut up, the door to Paramahamsaji’s kutir flung open, and there he stood. He said, “Sivamurti, go down to the kitchen, and offer your services there.”

So, we both ended up going down to the kitchen.

Now the kitchen-in-charge, at that time, was a very aggressive swami who had a talent for putting people in difficult and embarrassing situations. He seemed to have this strong need, within the workings of his own frame of mind, and in a most unique way, to try and put people in a lower position to him, and to demean people. Not that one can ever be put in a situation where they are demeaned if they have the right attitude. Nevertheless, it was enough for the kitchen-in-charge just to try to put you in a difficult physical situation. So, as soon as he saw me, he exclaimed, “Oh, ha, ha! Look who’s coming.” Then he ordered us both into the coal room to fill the buckets with coal in order to feed the fires in the kitchen.

As I was observing what was happening in my mind, wondering whether the swami was aware of his reaction, and of what he was saying, or whether that was just his nature, a most extraordinary thing happened. I witnessed that it was actually Paramahamsaji who was making it very clear to me that my thoughts had not

been correct. It was as though he was letting me know that my thoughts were like the coal heap, black and dirty, and that was why I was being put in there with the tons of coal. There is coal all around you and, in just one moment, you are covered from head to foot in black coal and your dhoti, your face, and your hands become black; everything is black. So we shovelled the coal into buckets, and the whole time, instead of it being a dismaying experience for me, it was an uplifting one. This was because I was aware that Paramahamsaji knew fully what was going on in my mind, and that he was showing me, through this example, that he was aware of everything, no matter what. This was a great comfort, because I had that beautiful and rare feeling of being accepted just as I was, and of being loved regardless of the positive and negative sides within me.

A wave of love in Greece

Swami Bhajanananda attended the first programs of Swami Satyananda in 1980 at Satyanandashram, which was then in Kypseli. She explains the impact that meeting Swami Satyananda had on her life.

At Athens airport a small group of devotees eagerly scanned the arriving passengers. Then there was a flash of geru, and his luminous face! Swami Satyananda entered, and my life changed forever.

The following day, five young people, all friends in our early twenties, arrived at Satyanandashram in Kypseli for our first personal meeting with Paramahamsaji. There were so many things I needed to tell him. We sat cross-legged before him in a small room, and I started crying, I could not utter a word. “Why is she crying?” he asked the others.

The following day, at Kypseli ashram on 1 May at 7.30 am, was the time of initiation. Sitting in front of Paramahamsaji, I said to him, “Thank you for existing.” I felt a need to talk to him about my life and my problems. He looked deep into my eyes and said, “I know everything about you.” I felt so relieved that he had access to my life and my past. I was not carrying the entire burden alone any more. He knew. Then he said some things to me. My life changed forever. He picked me up and placed me into a useful, meaningful life.

I followed the first steps of discipleship and sannyasa training in the Greek ashram. It was a busy and inspiring time, serving his mission, travelling, teaching yoga, managing a centre, overcoming obstacles, learning about life, and discovering the inner dimensions.

In the eighties, he used to come to Greece almost every year, for a few days or weeks. In those years, we had the opportunity to see him every day. During his tours, I became his translator. He did not speak Greek but, whenever I made a mistake, or even a slight deviation, much to the surprise and delight of the audience, he would correct me. People in Greece adored him.

In Athens, on Sunday, 5 December 2009, in the early morning, the telephone rang and rang. Eventually I woke up from a heavy sleep. I saw the following momentous message from Swami Sivamurti on my mobile, “Swami Satyananda entered mahasamadhi at midnight, last night. The world is changed forever. Please inform those close to him.”

No! We were going to see him for the New Year. I am in shock. I go straight to his photograph and chant the Mahamrityunjaya mantra. Then I beg him for a

message. I select one card, from a set of a hundred cards with messages. It reads, "Freedom. I let go of all my limitations. I dispossess myself of all weight associated with things, people, places. I fly!"

Whenever Swami Satyananda came to Greece, a powerful wave of love swept over the country, like sunshine, moving so many, and transforming so many. We are all so fortunate to have come into contact with him in our lifetime.

Changing a difficult situation into a positive one

Swami Bhajanananda's reflections on the developing ashram at Eptanisou Street, Kypseli, and Paramahamsaji's visit to that centre.

It was at Eptanisou Street, Kypseli, that the centre started to grow into an ashram. More and more students and karma yogis visited, and a couple of us came to live with Swami Sivamurti, who, up until that time, was doing everything by herself: the cooking, cleaning, reception, typing, giving classes, and learning Greek! I remember that there were no beds and, at night, one would have to sleep on the kitchen floor, in the tiny change-room, or in the sadhana room.

Strict discipline was kept from the very beginning. Swami Sivamurti insisted on our early rising, and on keeping the tradition of Swami Satyananda's style of dynamic ashram life, which was based on karma yoga. There were continuous activities from morning to night, from cleaning to transcribing. 1980 heralded the start of the first Greek edition of the Yoga magazine. I recall the times when we were in the tiny office, usually busy translating, typing, and editing the Greek Yoga

magazine. Swami Sivamurti would sit and type. There was such intense concentration that no one spoke. Once, I was very tired, and I went into the sadhana hall and lay down in shavasana for a few moments, at about the same time of the day when Greeks enjoy a full siesta, and she came in and said, "This is not a place of rest. If you wish to rest you can go home."

Those of us who wished to prepare for sannyasa, soon found ourselves in genuine geru-dyed dhotis. We did everything in our dhotis, from attending to daily errands around Athens, to teaching classes. This was unprecedented in Greece, to be laying the foundations and promoting the roots of a yogic community in the heart of Athens. People would often smile, or sometimes ask me a question. This was an opportunity to tell them about yoga. I would say, "It is the uniform of a yoga teacher." Soon, the first Teacher Training



Course was held with Swami Sivamurti. The premises expanded to include the second flat on that floor, which had a beautiful veranda that we decorated with flowers and plants. When you were inside, you completely forgot about the traffic and pollution outside. When you were outside, approaching the centre, you could feel the vibrations change from a block away. Such a powerful spiritual effort was being made here in a quiet humble way.

It was here that Swami Satyananda came in May 1980 to give lectures, satsangs and diksha. I recall an incident very clearly on one of the days that Swami Satyananda spent in this ashram. We were all very busy before his arrival with cleaning, painting and ensuring everything was fresh. We emptied all the cupboards, cleaning from the kitchen to the bathroom. We were preparing the whole ashram for him. Swami Sivamurti had just trained the first kitchen-in-charge on how to make sabji, rice, and dal. So, the recently appointed in-charge made the first meal for maybe five or six people. We sat down to eat and as the meal was served, I immediately tasted the dal. I was quite new and not aware that you usually wait for Swami Satyananda to start first. The dal I had tasted was so salty that I got a shock. It was like the saltiest sea water. I thought, "Oh no, we are not going to serve this to our guru. This is too salty!" Just as I was about to say something about the dal, Swami Satyananda immediately picked up his dal, and drank it and said, "Oh, it's so sweet", with a delighted expression. The cook felt so good about being praised! What a lesson for me, seeing how Swami Satyananda turned a difficult situation into a positive one. He spared the cook's feelings and he taught us all a lesson.

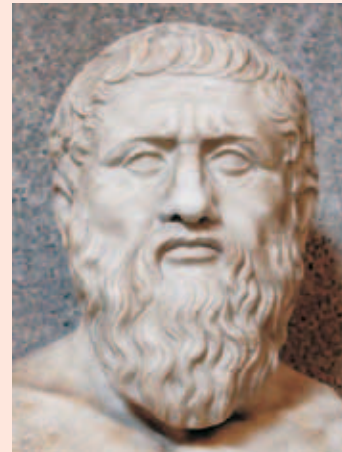


Chronicles

Swami Satyanandashram's activities in Greece expanded during 1980 with the development of a residential ashram in Pendeli. A further milestone was the publication of the first Greek edition of Yoga magazine. Swami Satyananda's third tour of Greece was in Athens, and included satsangs and public discourses at the Dionyssios Areopagitis Hall. Swami Satyananda initiated two devotees into poorna sannyasa at Satyanandashram in the suburb of Kypseli. He then continued on to Rome, Frankfurt, Vienna, Zurich, Brussels, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Paris, Barcelona and London, where he promoted the International Yoga Convention that he presided over in Colombia in 1981.

Greek Knowers of the Truth Plato

Plato (427-347 BCE) was a classical philosopher, mathematician, astrologer, writer of philosophical dialogues, and founder of the Athens Academy. Most scholars believe he was born in Athens. His main mentor and teacher was Socrates. Plato never speaks in his own voice in his dialogues, but only through the voice of Socrates. One of his most famous theories is the theory of forms, which is the belief that the material world is not the real world, but only an image or copy of the real world. The apparent or material world is always changing, and the real and permanent heavenly world of ideas (forms) is unchanging. Thirty-six dialogues and thirteen letters are traditionally attributed to Plato.



Matter can be divided, the atom is not indivisible, and beyond matter there is energy. This was the philosophical tradition which continued in Greece.

Diotima

Extracts of Socrates' speech from Plato's Symposium, where Socrates gives credit to a female seer, Diotima, as the one who initiated him into the ways of love.

Socrates: "I want to talk about some lessons I was given, once upon a time, by a Mantinean

woman called Diotima, a woman who was deeply versed in this [love] and many other fields and knowledge . . . it was she who taught me the philosophy of love."

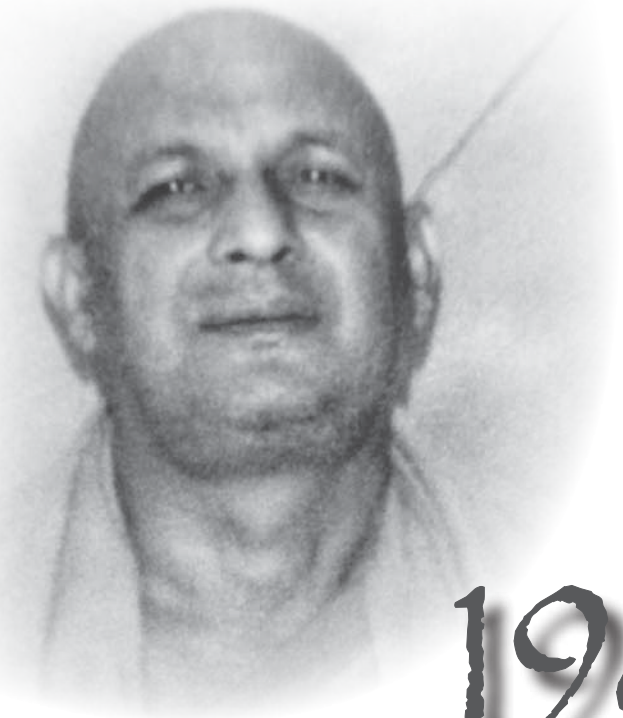
In her [Diotima's] view, love is the ascent to contemplation of the divine. For Diotima and for Platonic love, the purpose of love is to direct one's mind to the love of divinity and appreciation of this divinity as the source of love in the world.

Sayings by Plato:

Swami Satyananda on Plato and Socrates

- Greek people remember a great wise man like Socrates, but they have failed to follow him. They know him through Plato's dialogues, that's all. I have come to remind you.
- Socrates told the Greeks, "You say that matter is indivisible and ultimate, but there is something beyond matter." When he said 'Self', he meant something beyond matter. Of course, at that time, Socrates was misunderstood but today, what science is proving is exactly what Socrates said.

- If women are expected to do the same work as men, we must teach them the same things.
- You cannot conceive the many without the one.
- Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.



1981

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Day-by-Day Itinerary

Swami Satyananda, accompanied by Swami Amritananda (India), travelled from Italy to Greece for his fourth visit to us. He went to Thessaloniki, Greece's second largest city, and he presided over the first Pan-Hellenic Yoga Conference on 'Yoga and Health'.

Monday, 6 April

- Swami Satyananda's presence was all-pervasive at his first public discourse, 'The Healing Power of Yoga', at the Electra Palace Hotel, Thessaloniki. During Swami Satyananda's introductory remarks, he said, "I am particularly happy to be here, in this country, because the history of my country has great links with your country. Your country and my country were literally in love with each other. Your teachers and your people may not tell you that, but I will tell you today that there was a time that we were in love with each other." It was a stirring start, with well over one thousand people spilling out from Electra Palace into the city's Aristotelous Square, to hear Swami Satyananda. Additional loudspeakers had been set up to cater for the swelling crowds of people.

Tuesday, 7 April

- The first Pan-Hellenic Yoga Conference on 'Yoga and Health' was held at the Nepheli Hotel, in the Thessaloniki suburb of Panorama. People came from many different backgrounds and for many different reasons to meet Swami Satyananda. During the three-day seminar, the Nepheli Hotel was literally taken over, and was more like an ashram than a hotel. The venue was filled with kirtan chanting, and even the hotel chef had been trained to cook sabji, rice, and dal for the conference! Around twelve hundred people attended. Swami Satyananda held satsang later that day.

Wednesday, 8 April

- The second day's lecture was 'Revitalizing the nervous system'. Satsang was at a devotee's home and Swami Satyananda answered a wide array of questions.

- Satsang at devotee's home where he spoke on yoga and the mind.

Thursday, 9 April

- The third day's lecture was 'Yoga and Health'. Mantra diksha was given at the closing seminar. Swami Satyananda also outlined the role and purpose of ashrams. This subsequently inspired Thessalonians to form a yoga centre in Thessaloniki.



From the Media

Yoga of the 1980's by Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Extract from an article in a Thessaloniki daily paper

The spiritual quest is the most important thing and this is going to be the yoga of the 1980s. Man has to find himself, all of you, and me too. We are far, very far from ourselves, and that's the tragedy; that's the painful thing. Man has been able to discover matter, but he has not been able to discover the spirit. It is necessary to have thorough knowledge of matter, but matter alone does not give us everlasting life.

Where do we stand?

Why do we exist?

Where do we go?

And why have we come?

We have to give a solid purpose to our life. We don't just appear like plants or animals, without a mission. Every individual has a mission, a purpose. If we do not know this then the whole of creation and the whole of existence, all our philosophy and all religion, are completely baseless and purposeless.

By living life totally ignorant of your purpose, you are contradicting your religions; you are negating the philosophies. The means have become the purpose; thus, we have to reflect and question once a day,

Why have I come?

Why do I exist?

What is my purpose?

Am I the body?

Am I only this much, or am I greater than what I appear to be?

Am I this physical structure, or is there a greater reality within me?

How am I going to attune myself?



ΓΙΟΓΚΑ



Ο Γκουρού και οι μαθητές του κατά τη διάρκεια της χθεσινής εκδήλωσης

Τριήμερο πανελλήνιο συνέδριο για τις ευεργετικές επιδράσεις της Γιόγκα στη σωματική και διανοητική υγεία του ανθρώπου. — Με πρακτικά μαθήματα, συνεδριάσεις και ομαδικές συζητήσεις με την καθοδήγηση ενός Γκουρού, μπορείτε και σείς να αποκτήσετε την υγεία του σώματος, έναν ήρεμο και γαλήνιο νου και να απαλλαγείτε από την φθοροποιό ένταση και το άγχος.

ΡΕΠΟΡΤΑΖ ΒΑΝΑΣ ΧΑΡΑΛΑΜΠΙΔΟΥ

Newspaper clipping

Title: Thessaloniki discovers the secrets of yoga

Caption of photo: The guru and his students during the program.

Text in article: Three-day pan-Hellenic seminar about the benefits of yoga on the physical and mental health of humankind. In practical lessons and discourses with the guru, you can experience for yourself how yoga can bring about physical wellbeing, peace of mind and freedom from stress and anxiety.

First Pan-Hellenic Yoga Conference

7-9 April 1981

The objective of the conference was to present to delegates the yogic method to attain a healthy body and a calm, relaxed mind. This was done through a presentation of the theoretical and practical aspects of yoga. Various yogic practices were introduced that have their origin in the ancient science of tantra, such as asana, pranayama, japa yoga, yoga nidra, antar mouna, chidakasha dharana, and other practices for harmonizing the body, mind, and emotions.



Yoga and hypertension

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

It is now well known all over the world that yoga plays a very important role in tranquillizing hypertensives. Scientific researches done in the US, Europe, Japan, India and other countries, have proved that the practices of yoga can help one to become free from hypertension. In fact, in India I coordinated medical research for three years with the help of the Indian government, on the effect of yoga on diseases originating from hypertension. More than one thousand patients suffering from hypertension were referred to this coordinating body. The results were very optimistic.

First of all, we have to understand what is meant by tension and hypertension. In one of the books on hypertension the author has written an 'abbreviated' dedication to those who face diseases, epidemics, disasters and death, to those who live in poverty and face wars, to those who have lost their loved ones, and those who want someone to love them, to those who do not sleep in the night. He goes on dedicating his book to every aspect of life, meaning nobody is free from tension.

External demands

Sometimes you have floods in the country, then you have earthquakes; you have inflation in the market, then you have strikes; you have undesirable divorce in the family, then disobedient children, an unfaithful husband or wife, then your money is lost or your factory or shop is not successful, or you miss the plane or the bus. How many

things can we count that cause tension? Every time there is demand on the human body and mind. Each and every thought is a reaction of the mind and contributes to this state of tension.

When we are young we can sustain this pressure; when we are ignorant and innocent we do not know about the pressure. When we are arrogant or egoistic we do not understand the pressure. When we are jubilant or active and dynamic we divert the pressures. When we live a life of sensual pleasure we do not know about these matters, but when we grow up and become a little more mature in intellect and mind, then we begin to feel these pressures, we become more sensitive, we feel more clearly the pressures of the subconscious mind.

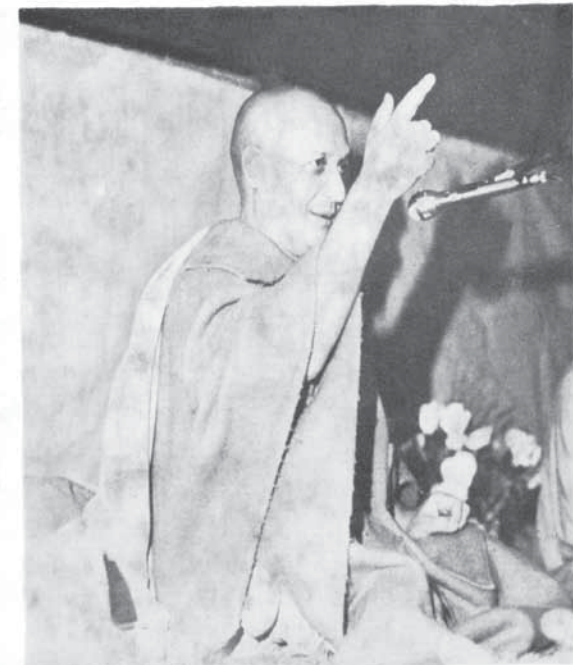
As the body grows old, the arteries are not able to absorb the pressure; the heart is exhausted, it is not able to sustain the pressure. Therefore the tensions are clearly seen in our faces, in our bodies, in our systems. Tension is a constant activity of the human organism and our organism cannot sustain it, therefore it is known as hypertension. For example, a young man having about fifteen kilos on his shoulders feels it, but he is able to carry it. When this boy gets to be eighty years old, if you put the same weight on him he will not be able to carry it. Therefore, a particular pressure in youth is tension and the same pressure in old age is known as hypertension, thus in yoga the analysis of hypertension is very scientific.

Interlocking systems

It is said that when you control the prana, hypertension is eliminated, the activities of the brain and the body and the total organism are controlled by different brain waves. These waves move in a definite pattern and they create what we call pressures in the body. When the brain waves slow down and delta waves appear,

ΠΡΩΤΟ ΠΑΝΕΛΛΗΝΙΟ
ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΟ
«ΓΙΟΓΚΑ ΚΑΙ ΥΓΕΙΑ»
ΥΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΠΡΟΕΔΡΙΑ ΤΟΥ
PARAMAHAMSA SATYANANDA SARASWATI

FIRST NATIONAL GREEK
SEMINAR ON
«YOGA AND HEALTH»
CONDUCTED BY



ΞΕΝΟΔΟΧΕΙΟ «ΝΕΦΕΛΗ»
ΠΑΝΟΡΑΜΑ
ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ
ΕΛΛΑΔΑ
7. 8. 9 ΑΠΡΙΛΙΟΥ 1981

HOTEL «NEFELI»
PANORAMA
THESSALONIKI
GREECE
7, 8, 9 APRIL 1981

you at once sleep. In one particular cycle of waves your behaviour changes accordingly. Sometimes you become emotional, sometimes you are very sensitive, sometimes you are very indolent, sometimes tranquil; this is a consequence of the brain waves. These particular brain waves ultimately influence the glands, hormones and different systems in the body.



It has been seen that in different brain wave cycles the body secretes different groups of hormones which are absorbed in the bloodstream, and accordingly the diseases originating from hypertension are created. It has been found that when alpha waves dominate the brain, the blood pressure falls. When the blood pressure falls, the pressure from the coronary system is reduced. When the demand of the pressure on the heart is minimized, then what happens is the various glands in the body become tranquil. In turn, these glands, such as the thyroid and adrenal glands, influence man's mental and emotional patterns.

Releasing the locks

Through the practice of yoga or meditation, alpha waves can be made to predominate in the brain. This is one aspect of yoga. But I told you earlier that man has been piling tensions over tensions on his system for many, many years. Right from your childhood you have been piling tensions on the brain. Every impression and every experience is stored in the mind in the form of an archetype.

There are certain impressions which are stored in the surface brain and there are other impressions that

are stored in the deeper brain. It is the impressions that are stored in the deeper brain that give problems. When there are too many and they don't find an outlet, then what do they do? They come out like an explosion, and when they come out as an explosion then you become a mental patient. Therefore, in yoga it is said that we should give an innocent outlet for everybody to express these piled-up impressions.

When you practise mantra, that is, japa yoga, and try to concentrate your mind, what happens is that many pictures, many images, different scenes are witnessed by you. During the practice of concentration and meditation you have so many experiences, you see so many visions, what exactly are they? All you see during concentration and meditation are expressions and manifestations of your samskaras, the archetypes. Then you understand that each and every experience is imperishable, everything you cognize is registered in you. You register these impressions through the eyes, the nose, taste and touch. These things are registered in your subconscious mind just as whatever I am saying is registered in the tape recorder. Right from the day you incarnated inside your mother's womb up to this day, everything and every experience is registered by you in your subconscious mind.

Nothing is going unregistered, please remember that. Even in the night when you are unconsciously sleeping, the process of registration is going on. Even when you are unconscious under morphine, ether or chloroform, the registration is going on because the subconscious mind is constantly active. The subconscious mind in yoga is known as the subtle body or the astral body. Even a child who doesn't understand anything has a completely natural astral body. Therefore, from the moment when you incarnated in your mother's womb, right up to the point where you go to the grave, the constant process of

Τὸ πανελλήνιο συνέδριο γιόγκα στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη



Ἀρχισε τὸ τριήμερο πανελλήνιο συνέδριο γιόγκα στὸ ξενοδοχεῖο «Νεφέλη» τοῦ Πανοράματος. Προεδρεύων τοῦ συνεδρίου εἶναι ὁ Ἰνδὸς γιόγκι Παραμαχάμα Σατυανάντα. Τὸ θέμα τοῦ συνεδρίου εἶναι «Γιόγκα καὶ ὑγεία». Ὁ γκουρού θὰ ἀναχωρήσει ἀπὸ τὴ Θεσσαλονικὴ τὴν Πέμπτη. Στὴ φωτογραφία, στιγμιότυπο ἀπὸ τὴς ἐργασίες τοῦ συνεδρίου, πού συνεχίζεται σήμερὰ καὶ αὐριο καὶ θὰ λήξει τὴν Πέμπτη.

Clipping from newspaper "Makedonia". "Pan-Hellenic Conference in Thessaloniki. Today, a three-day seminar, "Yoga and Health", began at the Nepheli Hotel in Panorama. It is presided over by the Indian yogi Paramahansa Satyananda." The Photo shows scenes from the seminar.

registration of every experience is going on whether you know it or not.

These impressions sometimes become too much for an individual, especially for people who have a suppressed personality. Very suppressed personalities are known as introverted personalities and many people in the world today belong to this category, particularly in the western countries. In the eastern countries there are lots of chances for communication and expression, of vomiting out what is in the mind without any verbal etiquette, but our modern society, I will not say western society, our modern society, is a suppressed society. We cannot even communicate with our family members openly and unassumingly. Therefore, everything is piled up within us.

The yogic keys

When you practise meditation or kriya yoga or some sort of raja yoga practices, then during meditation you have so many experiences. Sometimes you hear a sound in your ears, sometimes you see a lot of light or a lotus or a cross, or you see your guru or Christ, or a temple or a church. Sometimes you see a monster also or dirty animals. Sometimes you see beautiful gardens, sometimes death and violence, sometimes you hear celestial music. Then you have the feeling of heat or cold or have shocks in the body. Then you think like Christ or God, you feel like repenting for all you have done in the past. This is called an outlet. This is called manifestation of karma. This is called working out of the archetypes and this is called expression.

Now there is another important thing that you have to note. Whatever you experience in life has a symbol in the subconscious mind. If you experience pain, pleasure, comedy or tragedy, the same picture is not in the subconscious mind, it is immediately converted

into a symbol, just as a sound in the transmitter centre is transformed into radio waves and then transmitted through the radio field, then again reconverted into the sound that comes in your transistor. Throughout your life you have created millions of symbols in your subconscious mind, but nobody understands which symbol is for which particular karma.

There is another important thing: the karmas are endless. Every moment of your life you are going through experiences, even if you do not work, still you are creating karmas. Even if you live alone you are creating karmas because the whole of life is nothing but a manifestation of karma.

Simple living and high thinking

How to get out of this hypertension? We have found during our world tours that most people suffer from hypertension in the modern world. In the developing countries you have less cases of hypertension. In the developed countries you have a lot of hypertension. The more the country is developed, the more cases you have of hypertension. Another aspect that has come to our notice is that the people who have less material problems have more hypertension, therefore hypertension is not necessarily due to material worries. When you don't have to think about money for living, when you don't have to worry about retirement or mental treatment, why should you have tensions? However, we have found that among these people there are many more people suffering from hypertension.

From this, one point is very clear. It is important that a person must have material problems to get rid of hypertension, because material problems keep a man within a certain space. We have studied the statistics of people suffering from coronary thrombosis. Why should





the people who have succeeded in life, in business, in politics, have coronary thrombosis? Now here come the emotions into the picture. A man who succeeds has one type of emotion. The person who fails has a quite different type of emotion. These emotions immediately affect the glands and hormones and the metabolism.

Successful people become very dull, they become great show-offs, they become careless and contented. They think they can do anything with their success; they can fly to America this very afternoon and come back tomorrow morning, because they have a fat bank balance. This particular process of thinking immediately affects the critical organic process; they have diabetes, blood pressure, coronary thrombosis. If you have difficulties, then sometimes you have cold and cough, sometimes fever, diarrhoea or dysentery, sometimes headache or pain in the body, but not blood pressure or hypertension, because the problems are being worked out then and there.

In the practice of yoga, there is one particular aspect that is emphasized every time: simple living and high thinking. No matter who you are, you may be rich or poor, you may be a big factory owner or a labourer in the streets, you will have to simplify the whole process of living. Simple living is one of the most important ingredients in yoga. Complicated living contributes to hypertension. Complicated living creates a lot of distress in the emotional personality. However, in order to live a simple life you should have a simple mind as well.

—Discourse at the First National Greek Festival,
Hotel Nepheli, Thessaloniki, 7 April 1981

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Introduction to Hatha and Raja Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

During the last hundred years, the world has changed very rapidly. The social system and other systems are not the same as they once were. This has brought about a situation of dispersion of human energies at all levels. The mind of man has lost the point of balance and harmony in every sphere of experience. We are so engrossed in material survival that we have not been aware of what is happening to us.

In the last century or two, diseases have sprung up with new dimensions, expressions and manifestations. Various sciences are trying to tackle the problem of human sickness. But honestly speaking, they have failed to deliver the necessary health to man, because the problem does not originate in the body. It originates with man's ideals, with his way of thinking and feeling. When there is dissipation of energy, dispersion of ideals, how can you expect harmony in your mind and body?

In the last few decades, research into yoga has been done and the scientists, doctors and social workers have come to the conclusion that yoga is a way by which man's dispersion can be halted. Yoga is such a complete science that it treats not only the physical body, but the human mind, emotions and total personality at the same time. Therefore, it has become necessary to tell everybody throughout the world that you no longer have to be

disappointed in medications and treatment. What you are trying to create in your body, what you are trying to change in your mind, all can be done by you, within yourself, through the practice of yoga.

Hatha yoga: unblocking of the energies

Nature and God have created this body with all possibilities and hopes. Therefore, we have various forms and practices of yoga which have to be taught and learned. Of these, the most important is hatha yoga. Hatha yoga is a method by which you utilize this body in order to create harmony in the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. The practices of hatha yoga consist of a few physical postures and the breathing practices. Asanas are not physical exercises; they are postures maintained for a definite period of time.

There are two forms of energy flowing within this body: one is known as the vital energy and the other as the mental energy. When there is a block in the passage of either of these energies, then you have disease. Disease is not merely a physical condition. This physical body has to be properly understood, not only as an aggregate of flesh, blood and bone, but as a complex of energy movements. For example, an electronic instrument has a superstructure, but inside, it also has an intricate electronic complex. In the same way, in this physical body, there are definitely two types of energy that control the entire movement, existence and homogeneity. On account of wrong thinking, wrong eating or wrong living, sometimes obstruction takes place in the structure and passage of energy.





In the scientific studies it has also been found that the spinal column is not merely a set of bones and discs. In the spinal cord there are six sensitive junctions. Scientific studies have shown that when asanas and pranayama were practised, electrodes attached to the different junctions registered subtle energy charges. These junctions control the distribution of vital and mental energy to every part of the body. But if there is some sort of blockage or defect in the junctions, then the distribution of energy does not take place properly and various diseases and disorders result.

It has been found that generally these junctions do not register a proper flow of energy. When one is suffering from nervous depression, epilepsy or great excitement and anger, he registers a very low emission of energy. This means that when the energy is not properly supplied to different organs of the body, nervous tensions result.

How to release tension

What is the international problem today? Is it hunger, poverty, drugs or fear of war? No, the universal problem of our century is tension, hypertension, total tension. If you know how to free yourself of tension, you know how to resolve your problems in life. If you know how to balance tensions, you know how to control your emotions, anger and passions. If you know how to overcome tension, you can control heart disease, high blood pressure, leukaemia and angina pectoris.

If you examine anybody, you will find tensions. I myself have exposed hundreds of people to scientific observation immediately after entering deep sleep, but all of them were under tension in spite of perfect sleep. This occurs because we don't understand what is meant by tension. Tensions are of three types: muscular, mental and emotional. If you sleep well, you get rid of muscular tensions. But even if you sleep for months you cannot eliminate emotional tension.

Is there any science in the world that can help you release your tensions? Is there any drug or medicine that can relieve tensions? The various forms of tension are caused by low emission of energy. It has been found that when you practise yoga and pranayama, the junctions in the spinal cord register a high emission of energy. Therefore, the practice of hatha yoga is so important for clearing the blocked passages of energy in different parts of the body and releasing accumulated tension.

Pranayama and the brain

In hatha yoga there is another important branch known as pranayama. Usually, in the West, pranayama is translated as breathing exercise or breath control. In fact, pranayama is not only a breathing exercise or breath control; it is a system for training the different centres in the brain.

There are two types of breathing. We call them voluntary breathing and involuntary breathing. When you breathe automatically throughout the twenty-four hours, it is called involuntary breathing, and is registered by the inferior brain, the occipital region. Now, the moment you start voluntary breathing, a different computer in the frontal brain registers it. Voluntary breathing thus allows control of the different hemispheres of the brain.

I will give you one example of voluntary breathing. You breathe in through the left nostril, hold it for a period of time, then breathe out through the right nostril; breathe in through the right nostril, hold it for a period of time, then breathe out through the left nostril. Now, in our scientific studies, we have seen that when you breathe in through the left nostril, the activity starts in the right hemisphere of the brain, and when you breathe in through the right nostril, the activity begins to take place in the left hemisphere of the brain. And when you hold the breath, both hemispheres of the brain become operative at the same time.

It has also been observed that the breath which goes through the left nostril has a slightly lower temperature than the breath which goes through the right. This is because the left nostril is related to ida nadi, the flow of mental energy, while the right nostril is related to pingala nadi, the flow of vital energy.

Nowadays, in scientific experiments they are using ECG and EEG to record heart and brain waves, and GSR to measure electrical activity of the skin. They have found that the practice of pranayama results in a very synchronous flow of alpha, delta and theta waves which harmonizes the activity of the brain. The tensions recorded during periods of beta activity change when there are alpha, theta or delta waves. When the alpha waves manifest in the brain, it has been found that the tensions in the body are lowered and the heart becomes free from pressure.

Therefore, when we talk about tension or hypertension we definitely should know how to manage, control or train the brain to produce alpha waves. It is on this basis that a lot of work has been done in the field of biofeedback. However, in order to control the brain, you require a method to train the mind. You cannot control it by separation, fright or fear. The brain, which is the seat for the mind, can be controlled by managing the different centres through a systematic method of pranayama.

Raja yoga: mastery of the mind

Now I am going to talk about raja yoga, and the subject I am going to deal with is meditation. When your mind is one-pointed, that is known as dhyana yoga or meditation. This is one of the greatest achievements of man. One who can meditate can control every situation in life. If man does not know how to meditate, he knows nothing about life.

You may be able to handle the affairs of society, country, the military and the whole world, but can you handle your own mind? If you cannot handle your own mind, then you cannot handle anything. Meditation makes you master of your own self. But how to do it? Everybody talks about meditation, but nobody knows how to do it. Raja yoga deals in detail with the necessary requisites of meditation: the technique, how to sit, and what to concentrate on.

When you close your eyes and forget yourself; that is not meditation. You have to close your eyes and become aware of an inner point; then you keep going in. If your mind begins wandering, you have to be aware of it. Mind is nothing but consciousness, awareness. Your brain has millions and billions of archetypes in it, and these will have to be known, manifested and seen before you can expect any meditation. Therefore, in meditation you don't have to suppress the thoughts, emotions or impressions. You just concentrate and let



Swami Satyananda at the Nephili Hotel, Thessaloniki

anything happen to the mind, it does not matter, because the archetypes within the brain will have to be manifested, experienced and gone through completely. In raja yoga one of the important techniques is known as yoga nidra. It is a practice and a science in which you attain the state of total relaxation. In order to heal one's own mind and body, you have to know how to relax the whole composition, and in yoga nidra you lie down quietly and completely relax. Through this particular method you renew yourself, not only mentally, but also physically.

Yoga for a better life

So I have introduced the two systems of hatha yoga and raja yoga. If these are learned for our daily use, we can have better health and better experiences in life.

At the present time man is passing through a very difficult period in his life and experience. On the one hand, he has developed his awareness, and on the other hand he does not know how to handle it. In one way, he has become supersensitive and in another way he does not know how to manage it. Now he has become so aware of his inner being that he needs certain directive principles in his life. Therefore, out of twenty-four hours, if you can devote just half an hour to one hour every day, you can gain much from yoga in your life.

—Third discourse at the Pan-Hellenic Yoga Conference, 'Yoga and Health', 7 April 1981



Revitalizing the Nervous System

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

If one has a weak, sensitive and exhausted nervous system due to inheritance, how can one help it be revitalized?

There are two important practices that I can cite at this moment. In fact, one of the most important practices through which you can overcome nervousness for the time being is japa yoga, which has been known to Indians for centuries. Japa yoga is the practice which is done with the mala, based on your mantra. If the nervousness is acute then you can have a mala in your hand all the time.

Mala means garland through which you can practise mantra. If your mantra is Om Namah Shivaya, you repeat, Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya as you turn the beads. If the nervousness is acute then have a smaller mala and you can go on practising all the time unconsciously. You can talk to your friends, read the newspaper, shave, do whatever you like, or if you take breakfast eat with the left hand while all the time you practise mantra. If you practise mantra as many times as you can, it will be wonderful for coming out of an acute nervous condition.

Besides japa there is the practice of pranayama. Nervousness is a breakdown in the system of energy in the body. I'll give you an example: all these lights are burning on positive, negative and earth. There is an earth wire somewhere in the building. Go there and cut it, what will happen? You may get a shock. In the same way, in our body different movements take place according to the energy.

I have been talking and you have been listening. You eat food and you digest it. You breathe all the twenty-four hours of the day. If you are a typist you are typing the whole day, or if you are a housewife you are cooking and looking after the family or driving your motor car; all these actions demand energy. First of all you must realize this truth: the body is not only a physical machine, it is electrical as well. When you think, this also needs energy; anger, passion, worry, anxiety, love, hatred, all these things demand energy.

In this body there are millions of pathways which conduct this energy to remote corners of the body, and they are known as nadis or the nervous system. Broadly, they are classified as sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. Not only the major organs of the body, but even the processes of thinking and feeling are controlled by these nervous systems. These nervous systems are known as yin and yang, and in yoga as ida and pingala.

When we over-use the energy in our life then nervous breakdown takes place. For example, if you bring a very big heater and plug it into any normal house plug, it will fuse immediately. If you put in a stronger fuse, the wire will burn. It's the same system in the body. Your body has its own set capacity and limitation. Your nerves have their limit, and yet many times you are putting demands on your nervous system. A little emotion is okay, a little passion is all right, a little bit of anger is better, but too much is no good. When you are unnecessarily emotional, too much anger, vengeance and animosity, and too worried about little or big matters, then that draws the energy from the nervous system.

Kindly remember that the nerves do not produce energy. This electrical cable does not produce energy; it is only the conductor of energy. Within the body there is a point where energy is produced. Energy is produced

in different chakras and if there is a breakdown in the chakra then your nervous system cannot carry the energy, the electricity, through the body. Even if the wiring is all right in your building, if there is a breakdown in the generating station, will you get energy? So, when you talk about nervous breakdown, you must be clear on two points. Sometimes I laugh when people come to me because they don't understand the difference between nervous depression and nervous breakdown. They are not suffering from nervous breakdown but energy breakdown. There is no breakdown in the wiring; energy doesn't come because there is a breakdown in the generating system somewhere. So people who are suffering from nervous breakdown should remember that they will get nothing from taking a nerve tonic.

Do you know the name of the energy in the body? Inside we call it prana, outside you call it electricity. Electricity is generated in the powerhouse. You know how? Hydraulic, nuclear, solar and so many other methods exist. How do you generate energy within the body? The pranas are in the atmosphere in the form of negative and positive ions. These negative ions are plentiful in the mountains, by the side of a clean river, in forests and gardens, but there are very few in a city room, in the streets. In mountain air they found five thousand units per three hundred cubic feet as against fifty in a room.

When you breathe in, the air enters through the nostrils and immediately messages are sent about the quantity of ions which the air contains, and it affects the brain and nervous system. If the air is polluted the pollution is immediately thrown out in the form of cough or cold because nature wants to stop pollution lodging in the body as far as possible. Sometimes when you begin the yogic practices of neti and pranayama you do get cough and cold in the beginning, as the cleaning mechanisms

are stimulated. Then the receptivity of the body to the ions gradually increases and prana or energy level of the body increases in a balanced manner. This adjustment in energy and balance is basic in yogic therapy for 'nervous breakdown' or nervous depression.

These and other practices of yoga readjust and balance the body back into its natural way of functioning. So, even if you are not able to live by the pure river in the mountains, still you can begin to move your body and energy back into their simple, natural rhythms.

—Satsang at Nepheli Hotel, Thessaloniki, 8 April 1981

*There are various forms of yoga.
The most important is hatha yoga.
Hatha yoga uses physical
practices to create harmony in the
sympathetic and parasympathetic
nervous systems.*

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Introduction to yoga and the mind

Once upon a time, man had his own difficulties, but those difficulties did not belong to the mental or emotional dimension, they were mostly physical, gross difficulties. Then the structure of society began to change and, in the last one and a half centuries, man's mind has been facing greater stress, which he has not been able to cope with. This is reflected in his behaviour. What you see in family life today, in individual life, in national, and in international life, is a reflection of man's stressed out and tense behaviour. The whole psychic, emotional and mental pattern of man today is dissipated. He does not know how to bring these broken pieces of the mind together. He has been working on it a lot through medical sciences, the science of psychology and through religions, but somehow or the other, it has not completely helped him. Medical science has assisted him, modern psychology and psychotherapy have helped him a great deal; naturopathy, homeopathy and acupuncture have all assisted man to a great extent. However, the deeper man, the nucleus, the centre of man's personality has not been attended to.

In the human brain there are countless archetypes. There are millions, maybe more, and they keep on accumulating. No science has been able to penetrate to that depth. Therefore, in the last fifty years, throughout the world there has been an acceptance, I am not using the word 'revival', there has been an acceptance, of yoga. Man has discovered the path of yoga of his own accord. I am not sure how it happened because, in the past, yoga



was not greatly recognized. It did not have approval, as people thought that yoga was occultism. They thought yoga was a type of black magic, or religion, a way of renunciation, abstention, puritanism and self-restraint, so they could not accept it.

In the last fifty years, man has discovered three important elements in yoga. The first aspect is that it can influence the body. The second aspect is that it can reorganize the dissipated patterns of the mind, and the

third aspect is that yoga can help every believer live his religion more fully. These are the three important discoveries that man has made in the last fifty years. I have also thought of a fourth aspect and my emphasis is mainly on the fourth. The first aspect is the physical body, the second aspect is the mind, the third aspect is success in practising your own religion, and the fourth aspect is the awakening of man's potential. Man is not just bone, marrow, blood, flesh, mucus and urine. No. This physical body contains, within itself, some miraculous, strange, natural events, and natural laws. Our mind is not the ultimate manifestation of mind. There are various dimensions in the mind, and every time we evolve from one phase of mind to another phase of mind, it becomes more capable. As we transcend the different layers of the mind, our creativity finds an expression.

The point I want to emphasize is that the practice of yoga should be done in order to awaken the dormant potential in us, so that we do not continue to have infirmity of will and suffer as we have been suffering. With this idea in my mind, I have been teaching, preaching, and interpreting yoga for everyone. The point is clear: within himself man has all the possibilities of creative intelligence. This creative intelligence can be expanded beyond frontiers. There is no end to it. In one state of manifestation the mind is weak, but if the same mind undergoes a process through yoga and meditation, then it becomes a powerful tool in man's hands. After all, mind is energy; it is not a bundle of habits. Thought is not the mind, emotion is not the mind, anger is not the mind, dreams are not the mind. The mind is aware in its absolute totality. As we free this mind from its limitations, it becomes powerful, just like in physics. How do you release the energy in science? You separate matter. When matter is separated there is energy. When the grossness of mind is eliminated, when

the sensuality of mind is extricated, then what remains is called energy. On the path of meditation, in dhyana yoga, when we concentrate, we try to remain aware of one point, and everything else that comes into our mind is rejected. It is rejected as though everything was matter, and finally there is the awakening of shakti or energy, or inner spiritual life. This was my introduction to yoga, in short, and now it is up to you to pose your questions and inquiries.

Q. Can one practise yoga and also believe in something?

Paramahansaaji: Religion and God come to man according to the evolution of his mind and personality. Mankind, in general, believes in God and religion, because his mind has evolved that much. God and religion are an outcome of man's evolution. If man has evolved to a certain stage of awareness, then he does not need religion at all.

Q. Is religion relevant, is it necessary?

Paramahansaaji: As far as mental evolution is concerned, man has no choice today. I don't say that religion is



Swami Satyananda at the Nepheli Hotel,
Panorama, Thessaloniki

absolute, or that faith in God is absolute. It is not. But we have mentally evolved to a particular point, where we have no choice but to accept religion and God. When we deny this, the denial is merely intellectual, not emotional.

Q. Why do you think he can't go beyond it?

Paramahansaaji: He is at that stage of evolution. When a child is four or five or six, he just plays with his toys. He can't go beyond it. When he is in his twenties, he does not even remember his toys, he is with his friends, and he can't go beyond them. When he is in his thirties, he is with his family, and he doesn't remember his toys, or his friends, just the family. According to the evolution of mind, knowledge and awareness of reality take place.

Q. Through practising yoga we create a pure mind. At which stage of development do we reach this?

Paramahansaaji: With the practice of yoga man becomes aware of the deeper forces within himself. Man can harness those potentials, and create things like music or anything else.

Q. Is it dangerous to practise concentration that makes one introverted? Is it possible for man to become too focused on himself and not participate actively in the greater community and everyday life?

Paramahansaaji: It has not happened. It is only a type of hypothesis that many people consider, but it has not happened. Usually, those who have followed the path of yoga, after a certain period, receive inspiration from inside. In order to participate in the evolution of mankind, and in the dynamic aspects of life, there is a very short-lived phase, when you are practising yoga, where there is a sudden quietness. Perhaps that is the period when the new awareness takes charge of all the situations in

life. That is precisely why all the great sannyasins, saints, and sages have not only participated in the evolution of mankind, but they have led the movements. Whether it was Christ, or Buddha, or anybody else, they led a movement. After realizing yoga, they cannot ignore their commitments or duties to the evolution of mankind.

Q. My impression is quite the opposite, that the Bihar School of Yoga emphasizes this point more than many other schools, that yoga has a positive effect on man to live in society.

Paramahansaaji: Yes, we have to become an important part of the whole.

Q. How can someone who has a more European, or western philosophy and scientific attitude combine his way of life with yoga, with the internal life? Is there a contradiction in sentiments? When he decides to practise yoga, must he abandon his European way of thinking?

Paramahansaaji: The fact is that in the West or European society, yoga is being practised more than by any other people. In the last half of the century, it is Europeans who have discovered yoga for themselves, and not only discovered it, but integrated it into the scheme of their lives. By recreating the forces of their mind, they have added a new dimension to their philosophy. In fact, they don't have to abandon anything. Yoga is just a way through which you can either improve the body or the quality of the mind. If you improve the body, then you can function better, regardless of whether you are European or Asian. If you are able to improve the general quality of the mind, then your decisions, your conclusions, your theories, and your planning will often be better, and of a higher quality. Many great scientists, mathematicians, artists and thinkers definitely had a higher quality of mind than common man.



This higher quality could be improved upon, in which case one could be not just a philosopher, but a genius.

There is no European or non-European sentiment. Feelings and emotions are common to a common heritage. The only difference is that you divert your emotions and sentiments in one direction, and I direct them in another direction. The discovery of truth in the field of science, and the discovery of facts is not only intellectual or mathematical. It was an upsurge of the inspiration that was latent in every great person, a psychic expression of man. As such, yoga can go hand-in-hand with the occidental way of thinking, acting, and planning.

Another important point, I want to stress, is that civilization and culture rotate. In the last two hundred or so years, it was the turn of European people. Six hundred or a thousand years ago, it was the turn of Greeks. Two thousand or five thousand years ago, it was the turn of Indians. In another hundred or two hundred years we don't know who is going to preside over the civilization and culture. No community has the copyright over culture and civilization. You develop a culture, you improve a civilization, your people follow it, and then you get used to it. There is stagnancy and you change it. It happened in European countries, it happened in America in one way,

and it happened in India, in Asia, in another way. You see the point? This is how the human mind keeps rotating. In a few years time, perhaps some other nationalities, or some other communities will put the same question to me.

Society, as a whole, becomes self-satisfied and, when your culture and civilization attains its peak, there is sluggishness in the mind and there is sluggishness in temper, what you call self-satisfaction. Then sensuality becomes more important: pleasures, comforts and fashions become more important. Not that one doesn't have to put on a nice dress, but that is not important for us now. For us, achievement in life is important. To create, to plan, to give techniques to mankind in different fields: science, art, music, dance, philosophy, religion and politics. What is happening now is that these things have become unimportant. Creativity has become secondary, or is becoming secondary, or might become secondary, after a few decades. Sensuality might play a primary role in life and, when this happens, then culture and civilization change hands.

A second point is that, when a community becomes affluent, powerful and rich in cultural heritage and well-civilized, it needs to be assisted by what we call servants, the working class. In the course of time, this working class becomes popular, powerful, and indispensable. Once this working class becomes indispensable, then it advances to snatch the monopoly of culture and civilization from the rich. That has always happened in history, and the same thing is happening nowadays. So, let's wait and see how history turns out.

Q. Homer wrote the Iliad. Do you also have epics?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, you call them epics or mythology; we call them Puranas. We have the story of Rama. They are the same type of stories. You call it Homer's polytheism;

we call it Vyasa's polytheism. In India there was a great scholar and his name was Vyasa. He was the author of the Bhagavad Gita. Hindu mythology is called the polytheism of Vyasa, and here we have the polytheism of Homer. Polytheism is where you have the concept of many gods.

Q. We also have Greek tragedy and theatre here: Aeschylus, Sophocles and others. There was a play in Athens by a company from New Delhi, India, and it was similar.

Paramahamsaji: In the archives in India, we have the writings of one of the Greek ambassadors who was in the court of an Indian emperor, almost two thousand four hundred years ago, a hundred years after Lord Buddha. An ambassador, from this country, used to live in the court of India, and an Indian ambassador used to live here. His name was Megasthenes, and we have his writings intact. He wrote about Indians not putting locks on their houses.

Q. As far as the meaning of archetypes, do you use this word in a yogic sense or in another sense? Do you accept the interpretation that in the consciousness of each man there are symbols and real images which influence the super ego and form the spiritual life?

Paramahamsaji: Yes. When you look at a picture, you have an immediate acceptance or rejection, and then it immediately stimulates something new. In the same way, if you draw a yantra or a mandala, that will also influence the archetypes. It is also said that an experience ultimately assumes the form of an archetype or, in other words, every experience is like the seed of a plant. In the beginning it is latent, but it finally assumes the form of an archetype.

In the science of tantra we have different tools: the first is called mantra, the second is yantra, and the third

is mandala. Mantra is also used to explode these images. However, not all the images can be exploded, because mantra is a low-potency practice. It is not a high-potency practice. We don't give high-potency practices, because one might not be able to face the experience. In order to explode these images, first you do low-potency practices, so that you keep the balance on the mental planes; so you don't lose the balance and feel strange. Otherwise, sometimes when these images flood in, you don't know how to face them. So, first we explode them through mantra and then, in the second stage, we explode them through yantra (geometrical diagrams). In the third stage they are exploded through the symbolism of gods and goddesses. These existed in the old Greek systems. Hindus, and all the old ancient tribes had them; e.g. Celts, Aztecs, Incas and Mayans all had gods and goddesses. These were actually not gods and goddesses, but particular symbols to explode the deep-seated images. If man could explode these deep-seated images, perhaps he could fracture his mind. He could create a situation of vision and something great could come out.

So, the modern explanation, and the way we understand it, does not differ much. There is some difference, of course, in the expression, terminology, or background of the people to whom we are defining it.

Q. What do you have to say about love? What is the meaning of love according to yoga?

Paramahamsaji: When the barrier of I and you is removed, that state is called love. In love there is no I and there is no you. There is no duality. When there is a level of personal ego, and I see myself as different from you then, of course, your pain is your pain, and not my pain. Then your pleasure is your pleasure, and is not my pleasure. I am I, and you are you. That is called duality. When a baby



or a child is suffering from fever, the mother also suffers simultaneously. That is because she has completely merged her identity with the baby. This merging of identity is liquidation of ego.

Q. We call that symbiosis between mother and baby.

Paramahamsaji: No, that is just an example to make the point clear. Love is the most difficult thing to practise in our human society. I'm not talking of the love that we hear about in the marketplace, but the type of love where differences fall flat. When the sense of union prevails within individuals, and the feelings begin to move almost parallel. Saints and sages talk only about this love and man, of course, has found it very difficult to practise, because of the inherent limitations within himself and his own personality. Love is an expression; it is a manifestation, but there are barriers. If these barriers in our personality could be removed, then my natural or

real or original behaviour would be the behaviour of love. What I want to tell you is that, in fact, love is man's innate nature but because of the barriers, he's not able to give complete, total, or absolute expression to that.

Q. You previously spoke about the fourth aspect of yoga and awakening the potential in man. Does that potential have something to do with love?

Paramahamsaji: No, I said 'potential'. I only meant the level of creative intelligence. I was not talking about love. Love is higher than this. The highest, I think.

Q. So, what about the potential? Love must be the potential.

Paramahamsaji: True. However, let man go just one step further now. Wherever man is today, let him just move on and go to the next stage. Once he goes to the point of creative intelligence, then he will have to be taken further. If he starts making an attempt to develop love in him, before he reaches that stage, it will merely be an intellectual affair, not an experience, nor a spontaneous expression. A baby has to become a child; a child has to become a young man. Our next achievement must be creativity of intelligence. In a few centuries, or in a few decades, or whatever it might take, a few thousand years, if man is able to have this higher form of intelligence, then he will have to go to the next stage, because this is not the ultimate.

Q. Don't you want to speak about this higher state?

Paramahamsaji: I do.

Q. I think people want a reason to reach that state.

Paramahamsaji: Hindus talk about nothing but love. That is the most important thing. All the devotional songs,

all the music, and the entire Hindu culture say that the highest thing is called prem. In Sanskrit it is called prem, or love, which is of two types: when the mind goes to the sensory objects, this is one form of love, and when the mind goes to a higher or an elevated side, this is called a higher form of love. We talk about it day in and day out.

Q. Is it possible to arrive at a higher love without going through the mental process?

Paramahamsaji: It would be much better if man was more organized first. The stage mankind is at today, man has a



dissipated condition; he is far from himself and completely engaged in all kinds of external activities. If you have to run a household, for example, you have to organize things first. If you have to run an office or a factory, you have to organize things. Man's life must be organized; his mind must be organized. Otherwise, the insane man will have an insane definition of love also. A dissipated man will have a dissipated definition of love, and a tense man will have a tense definition of love. This happens, you know. It would be very nice if the whole personality became integrated at some level, not completely, but to a greater extent. Then we can find balance. Therefore, not the mental, as you call it, but the emotional process has to set in.

Q. But mental is something different from emotional.

Paramahansa ji: I have a particular definition of mind, intellect and emotion. What you experience is emotion, what you think is the mind. Through mind I can tell you what the taste of all of these things is. I have never tasted them, but I can think, I can tell you what the taste is, because I have thought about it, read books about it. I have acquired knowledge, but I have not had the experience. If I eat it just once, I have the knowledge of the taste and I have the experience as well. Emotion belongs to the dimension of experience, or experience belongs to the dimension of emotions. Emotion is an experience; mind is a process of thinking. You know so many things, but you don't have personal experience. We talk about so many things we don't even know, we haven't even seen them.

So, we should start loving from some point. In the Hindu system they start bhakti yoga. How do you practise it? They say, in order to develop supreme love, unselfish love, boundless love, you should associate with or you should live in the company of those who talk about the truth. Then, after having associated yourself with those

who speak the truth, you must always discuss or hear about God's place in your life. What is God's place in our life? We have to think about it. This is how you develop love. One of the most important ways that Hindus practise love is to go to their guru. They love their guru so much that they are even prepared to give their life. Of course gurus don't ask for life, but disciples are prepared to do

anything for his sake. Another thing to do is sing kirtan. Any time if you attend kirtan in India, thousands of people chant just one name for hours together. They just become one with it, they lose their personal identity for the time being, and almost everybody does it. In the villages there are kirtan groups. Kirtan means singing a particular set of names again and again, again and again with music. After



the villagers have finished their work in the evening at eight o'clock, they all sit down and start singing the whole night! In the morning at four o'clock, they take a bath and go to their fields again.

Q. But how do they arrive at that point, just by hearing about the truth?

Paramahamsaji: Just by practising, not by thinking.

Q. This was my question, does it have to be a mental process or not?

Paramahamsaji: It has to be a mental process. As I said, man has to be organized, his mind has to somehow be set in order, if it is not so already. The Indian villagers' minds are completely harmonious. They are a completely harmonized people. Their social life, political life, marital life and financial life are in complete harmony. So, they don't have to work on that. In the Indian villages they don't practise yoga! They don't need it. Even today in India sixty-seventy per cent of Hindus don't need yoga. They live in the open air, they breathe pure air, they walk miles on foot, they bathe in the rivers, ponds and lakes, not in the bathroom, and their environment is completely natural. They don't have diesel motor cars, automobiles and all that, and every night they sing God's name in kirtan. Every month they have some spiritual ceremonies, either in the community or at home, so their life is completely different. They don't have to do this preliminary work.

However, I am talking about the modern man, not only in Europe, but also in India, in Asia. Those who live in the cities, where there is sound pollution, food pollution, thought pollution, this pollution and that pollution, their family life or professional life or emotional life or intellectual life is completely imbalanced, and they are completely insecure and ignorant with so many processes

taking place within them. He is only aware of what is happening outside, he doesn't know what is happening within. He does not know the deeper psychological behaviours. That man has to be brought to a point of integration and harmony, and then he should start bhakti yoga, the yoga of love.

Q. What about ritual singing?

Paramahamsaji: It is a science in itself. In India we consider it a complete science. One man guides the kirtan, the others follow. It is not a very complicated thing. Just all the names of God are sung. After one, two or three hours, or sometimes they do it for twenty-four hours, the mind attains a point where they get intuitive flashes. They keep a vigil, they sing and don't sleep, for twenty-four hours, and the brain registers the sound waves and the love. It is not only the sound waves, but at that time they are also developing love, they are developing spiritually, they are awakening a great impression or a change in the emotional structure, or the emotional deposits of man, which everybody has. Man has so many emotional things stocked which we don't really dispose of, like a mother's death, father's death, friendship, enmity, revenge, love, hatred, greed; so many emotional situations. Man does not know how to get rid of this great emotional stock that has been tricking him from time to time, e.g. I hate you, or you hate me, etc. But we don't know what to do with these emotions.

There has to be some process through which the mind can attain tranquillity. When a transformation in the structure of the mind has taken place, then many things become useless. I remember about thirty years ago I was teaching in a classroom in my village in Rishikesh. There was a boy who came up to me and abused me for no reason. I was so offended! I just wanted to kill

him! But thinking about it after twenty years, I think how foolish it was. I wanted to kill him, but what for? Just because he called me a rascal? I was not a rascal and he was an ignorant boy, he could have told me anything. I was a swami, a sannyasin, I should have understood him much better. You see, that kind of tranquillity and understanding, that kind of rationalization of the whole situation comes when the mind attains a particular state of harmony. This harmony comes when you have been able to transform the mind at its biological level, psychological level and emotional level. This is a beautiful thing. You must sing kirtan.

—Satsang at a devotee's home in Thessaloniki,
8 April 1981

The second step in yoga is a systematic life. You have to create a system in your life about purity, contentment, regular study of spiritual books, simple living and prayer to God.

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. To what extent can yoga help to prevent or alleviate illness caused by karma or past lives?

Paramahamsaji: Every experience is registered in the subconscious mind. The subconscious mind is known in yoga as the astral or subtle body. From the time when



we were reincarnated, deep in our mother's womb, up to the point of death, each and every experience is being registered and witnessed by the subconscious mind. The astral body is constantly awake. Even in deep sleep, it is registering the impressions. Even in hypnosis, created by ether, chloroform, or morphine, the registration is going on. These experiences of life are witnessed through the medium of the sensory channels.

These sensory channels, that are five in all, retain the impressions through the conscious mind, and are transferred to the astral body later. However, as long as these impressions are on the conscious mind, they are not transformed. But when they are transferred to the astral body, they are transformed into the form of symbols. These symbols are known as archetypes. In the philosophy of yoga, they are known as samskaras. Now here you have to understand the relationship between karma and samskara. Karma is a general word used in yoga philosophy. It is used for an experience; it is used for the archetype; and it is also used for the consequences of the karma. When you have an experience, that is a karma. When you undergo a consequence, that is also a karma. Many times you have heard people say, "Oh, I am undergoing my karma."

However, in yoga philosophy, the experiences are considered to be converted into archetype symbols. It is not that easy to talk about the archetypes. The human brain contains millions, and billions, and trillions of archetypes. And there is constant expression of these archetypes in our day-to-day life. Your personality is an expression of the totality of your archetypes. If you can rearrange your archetypes you can rearrange your personality. If I can confuse your hormones, I can confuse your personality. These archetypes are the symbolic personality within the astral body.

Q. How can I become free from karma?

Paramahamsaji: Archetypes are expressed in the form of dreams. Sometimes, when there is an explosion of a dormant suppression, and one becomes a mental case, then the archetypes are expressed. The point is, man has been accumulating karma not in one life, but in many lifetimes. We are not the storehouse only of our previous karma, but we are also the storehouse of the karma of our parents and grandparents. There is a branch in biology on DNA molecules, and it seems that the molecular structure is instilled in us from our father, our grandfather, our great-grandfather, and our great-great-grandfather!

One of the important purposes of yoga is to get rid of these karmas. Of course, it is a very important subject that we are dealing with at the moment, as in recent years yoga has been used for therapy, and it has done a wonderful job. It has superseded all other systems of therapy. In many countries, when all medical systems have failed, yoga has succeeded. Coronary diseases are being treated by yoga, as well as mental and physical diseases.

However, in the past, when yoga was taught, it was not taught for this purpose. In India, when yoga was discovered, the purpose was different. Even to this day, in India we practise yoga for a different purpose. We practise yoga in order to get rid of the karma. Through life after life, we have collected karma and today, we are bound by the chain it has created. The spirit is captive within the body. The light shines within the sheath, but it cannot be seen. Just as the caterpillar is within the cocoon, the spirit is within the body, and it has to be liberated.

How can we liberate it when the karma attained is so gross? Unless we eliminate the force of karma, unless we destroy the very basis of karma, we can never realize the spirit within us. The butter is in the milk; the butter

is captured in the milk; we know it, but we cannot see it. If you cannot churn the milk, you cannot get the butter. You know there is butter, but you cannot have it, because you do not know how to churn the milk. In the same way, the spirit is in you. You know it. It is written in the books. Everybody reads them, but how do we find it? To know that the spirit is in you is not enough. How do we separate the spirit from the gross? And what is this gross made up of? The gross is made up of karma. Karma is made up of desires. Desires are made up of ignorance, and ignorance is eternal. Therefore, through the practice of yoga, you have to deal a very definite blow to this gross part. Hatha yoga and raja yoga, and all the other forms of yoga, are the basic preparatory systems for this task.

The highest of all the yogas is tantra, which is a process of separation of matter from energy, or energy from matter. How do you separate the butter from the milk? How do you separate energy from matter? In the same way that you separate the butter from the milk, you have to separate the spirit from the gross. This process is known as the process of separation. In the practice and philosophy of tantra, there are three important things. They are yantra, mantra, and mandala. They are the three basic principles of practice in tantra.

These basic practices in tantra are coordinated with kriya yoga, and are practised within the ordinary situations in life. You do not have to renounce life, or become a monk. You do not have to become an ascetic, a hermit, a philosopher, or a cynic. You are what you are. That is how tantra was formulated and how it is put into practice. When tantra is properly practised, and the mind is broken completely, the energy is liberated and the consciousness is expanded, then the karmas of many, many lifetimes are burned as though there was nothing. It is a very simple philosophy. Where there is attachment, there is pain; and

where there is no attachment, there is no pain. Where there is desire, there is frustration; if there is no desire, there is no frustration. When you have realized the ultimate purpose of life, the gross falls away.

Q. Are there measurable effects of mantra?

Paramahansa ji: A few years ago, a Spanish swami who was a student of medicine in Barcelona, did an experiment on meditation and Om chanting at a hospital. It was discovered that when Om chanting is done, the sound 'O' produced beta waves, and the sound 'M' produced alpha waves. There is a pranayama known as bhrumari pranayama. In bhrumari pranayama you plug both your ears and produce a humming sound. It is a very, very melodious sound. Even today, when I meet somebody who suffers from high blood pressure, I tell him immediately to practise bhrumari pranayama, as the continuous sound of 'M' has a very resilient impact on the brain and the general organism.

It was on the basis of these scientific investigations that have been made that I wrote a book a few years back on hypertension. That book has been received very well in almost all nations by the medical circles. I myself collaborated and coordinated with the research done by the researchers. A combination of the practices of hatha yoga and raja yoga is very important for hypertension. Mantra also has a powerful vibratory effect on the general human organism. At the beginning, we thought that mantra was the name of a god or goddess. However, we found that it was sound vibration working in the brain and the body. In fact, everybody has a sound of his own, and this sound is his inner personality. Therefore, everyone is different from each other, insofar as the sound is concerned. It is important that everybody discovers a sound for himself. When you have been able to discover a sound for yourself, you have discovered a mantra for

yourself. A man's personality is a sound. At the same time, a man's personality also has a symbol. It is, however, very difficult to discover a right symbol for yourself. It is easier to discover a sound or a mantra for yourself.

When worry overpowers you, when your mind is burdened with problems, or when you face a state of confusion in life, then immediately retire to inner silence with the help of your mantra. Withdraw yourself from all forms of thought practices. Withdraw yourself from all forms of what is called confused thinking, and gradually enter into the void. The mantra will help you step into the void.

What is this void? When you are getting no experience or movement of the mental process, that is the void. When the mental process of the mind stops, that is the void. It does not happen for a long time. No, not for a minute. Not even thirty seconds; not even ten seconds. One, two, three seconds void, and everything is accomplished. When mantra permeates the whole consciousness, then all thoughts cease. For a moment there is unconsciousness. Time, space, and object do not exist in that moment. Name and form do not exist at that moment. It is at this moment that tensions come down and an answer is discovered, and you find a way out of the situation. Everybody has problems. Everybody, therefore, must have a solution. It is very unscientific to say, "I have problems and no solutions." It is very unscientific to say, "I have problems and you have the solutions." Problems and solutions coexist. You do not believe me? Try it. I talk from experience. Problems and solutions are the two sides of the same coin. But poor man, he sees one side of the coin and does not turn it over. You can turn the coin over with the mantra. Through mantra you create shunya, void. In shunya you see the solution and in that solution you will find peace of mind. In peace of mind there is no tension. A man who has tension has no peace of mind. So, this is a very clear analysis of tension and peace of mind.



Q. With yoga we try to reach a higher level of evolution, and we work with ourselves, and we help ourselves. As members of a group, as members of the whole world, this means, in a way, that we evolve for everybody as well. Is there any way that we can help other people practically through yoga with their problems, our children for example, when they do not want to practise yoga?

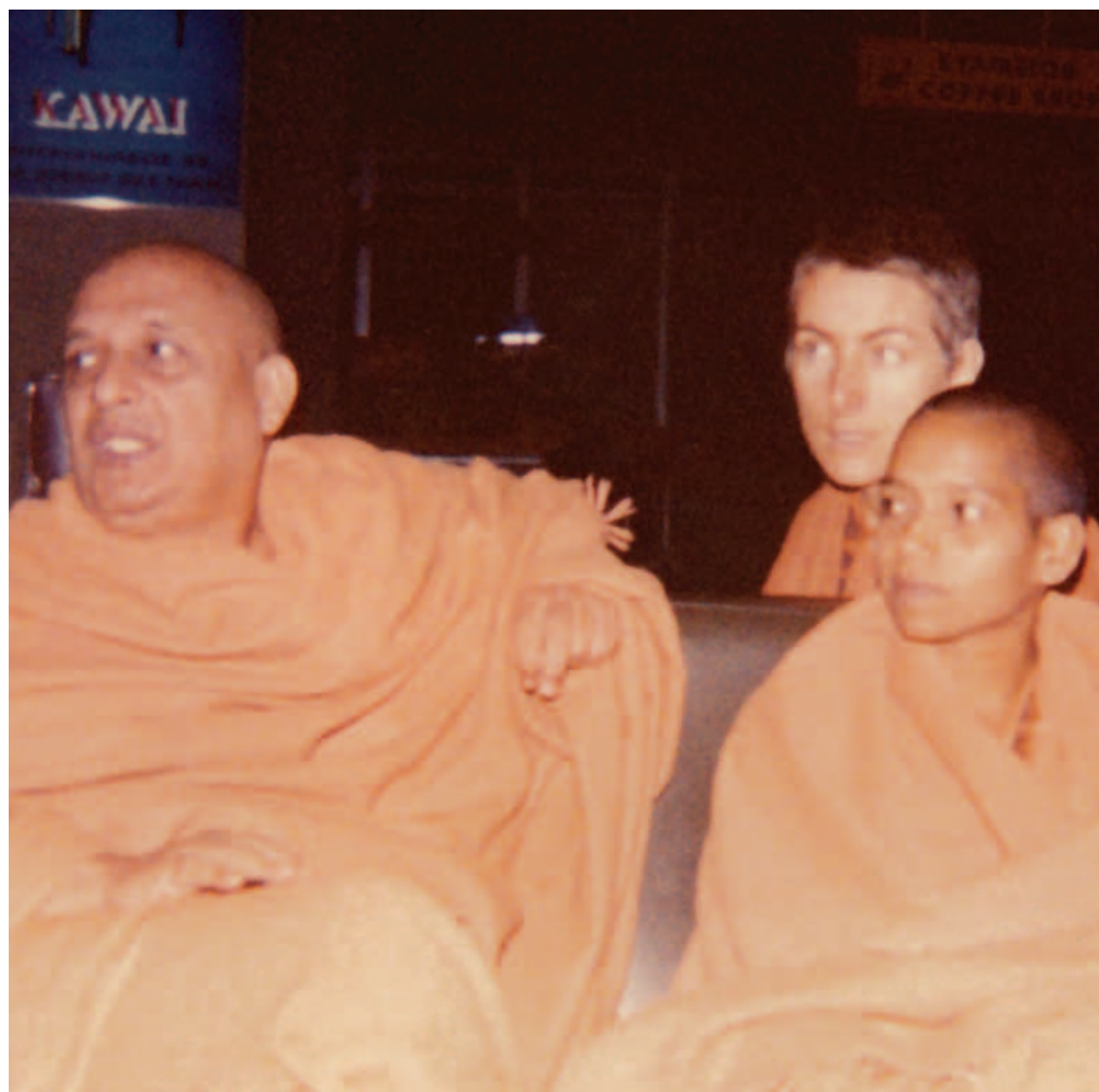
Paramahansaji: Yoga has come to be understood as a process for accelerating evolution. In the last two or three decades, yoga has caught the attention of seriously-minded people. In the last two centuries or so, we were engrossed in material acquisition. We did not have time to think about spiritual evolution. In the last two or three-thousand years, there have been numerous political accidents throughout the world and during this unhappy and unfortunate period, there has been barbarism, and there have been unspeakable cruelties perpetrated by men. Due to this, people could not think of spiritual evolution. I have read a little bit of history and I believe you too have done so. In the last two or three thousand years what I see is people fleeing from one country to another for asylum due to manmade catastrophes. Everything was being destroyed by one group or another, even group systems were destroyed. Education was destroyed, administration was destroyed, houses were destroyed; everything was under fire for twenty or thirty centuries. Tired of this, man ultimately thought of evolving a different type of society in the last two or three hundred years. Men must be free, women must be liberated, education must be available to all, and everybody has to know how to make money and live in happiness. In the past, man had to face the tragedies of nature like flood, famine and devastation. He had no time to think about yoga and evolution, but now we have come to a point of

critical climax. We are at a pinnacle today, and we have to move on from there as well, and some of these problems you have indicated in your question.

The philosophy of yoga is a mature philosophy, but in order to apply this yoga philosophy in our social and daily life, one has to accept it. If you just practise asanas, pranayama and hatha yoga in the morning, it will not do. It is also necessary that you understand that the practices of yoga do not merely influence the body, but they influence the very personality of the child. In fact, in Paris, for the last five or six years, I have been given the opportunity to introduce yoga as an experiment in a high school to the boys and girls. From time to time, the children who are taught yoga are examined by experts. In the meantime, the school inspectors and the education authorities are keenly watching the results of the yoga training to the children. The primary report has already been given by the educational inspectors of the department. I have also printed that report in one of the issues of Yoga magazine. I believe it was in 1979. What is encouraging to note is that the parents of the children are very happy and have told the school inspectors that after the children started yoga, they have had a better relationship with their parents.

Now, a better relationship with their parents means that they have evolved mentally. At the same time, as far as their school studies are concerned, the teachers of the class say that they were much better than they were before. Many other tests have been carried out with the children. One of the swamis has been sent to Paris and she has joined that school as a teacher. She teaches English to French people and is a regular government teacher now. She teaches yoga to different classes every day in one of the periods.

Recently we had a seminar for children, and we prepared the seminar for only forty children. Can you



However, in yoga philosophy, the experiences are considered to be converted into archetype symbols. It is not that easy to talk about the archetypes. The human brain contains millions, and billions, and trillions of archetypes. And there are constant expressions of these archetypes in our day-to-day life. Your personality is an expression of the totality of your archetypes. If you can rearrange your archetypes you can rearrange your personality.

believe how many parents came with their children? We wanted only forty children, and we had two hundred! We did not have enough space for them. So, one group was sent to the town hall, another group was also sent to that hall, and the third group was sent to a different hall. Newspaper editors and journalists, who had previously been critical of me and yoga in one of their telecasts last year, also came. These reporters came to criticize again, but instead they wrote that one positive direction has definitely been taken with yoga. Whether we like it or not, children like it, and what children like, they must be given. They also made another comment. Yoga has not only changed the children, it has changed the parents as well. Now they have formed a body to discover ways and means to make yoga escalate throughout all the educational institutions in France.

This modern epidemic has also affected Indian boys and girls. They are creating a lot of irregularity in the social system and the elders of the country have started thinking seriously about this. They say, "We are not going to wait like the West has waited." It is important that yoga is introduced now at the primary level. The central government has given yoga the green signal. The state governments are being pressed to introduce yoga into schools as fast as possible. Yoga has become compulsory since 1980 in all the schools run by the central government employees, and in all the educational institutions which educate the central government employees' children. In the government of my state, the educational minister and the health minister have already approached me and requested that I teach their students. However, as I have a different organization in my mind, I said, "I'm not going to teach your students. I will teach your teachers." So, the Bihar School of Yoga has been given a contract to

prepare and teach thirty thousand middle and primary school teachers.

Besides these children, yoga has now been experimented with in prisons. If it succeeds, we can then definitely say that yoga can be a tool in the evolution of society. The experiments are in-depth and intensive. A lot of work has been done, but not enough. We will have to experiment with yoga in every sphere of life. I have one resolution in my mind and that is the aim of my life. Perhaps I was born with that mission, which is to take yoga from door to door. Formerly I used to say, "Take yoga from shore to shore." But now I have the resources. Yoga can be taken from door to door. The children must be taught in schools. The prisoners must be taught in jails. The employees must have yoga instruction before they are granted employment. Before a girl and a boy get married, both of them must know yoga. Whenever you are given employment in a bank or an office, the employment commission must say, "Where is your certificate of yoga from Satyananda ashram?"

In the medical system also it must be made clear that the doctors understand where yoga is more efficient than medicine. Just as in the hospital you have a chest clinic, or this clinic or that clinic, so you must have a yoga clinic or a yoga department with expert doctors in yoga. On television as well, according to the situation and the habits of a country, there must be an hour of yoga teaching, at least once every morning. The time must be known to the people so they get ready with their blanket. Also, there must be a section in the magazines on yoga, a yoga column. I'm sure that then we will create a very good process of evolution in the jumbled strata of society.

—Satsang at Thessaloniki, 7 April 1981

Impressions

Guru at play

Swami Sivamurti recalls a time with Swami Satyananda

When Paramahamsaji visited in 1981, he stayed at the Nepheli Hotel, where the program was being conducted. The balconies at the Nepheli Hotel connect, and it is possible to climb over the balcony of one room to the one next door, if one really wanted to! Although I don't think anyone had ever tried it.

Paramahamsaji, Swami Amritananda and myself were in one of the rooms talking and laughing about something. It so happened that I had to leave the room, but for some reason, I was not able to exit through the door. I made a quick decision to climb over the balcony.

At that time I was the cashier, and so I had bank notes stuffed in the back pocket of my kurta. As I climbed up and over the balcony, Paramahamsaji took the money. I didn't notice this. When I got on to my balcony, I realized it, and I turned back and saw him, on his own balcony, roaring with laughter! So, guru plays. He can really be anything. At any point in time one never knows how he will respond. So many amazing experiences!

Another time at the Nepheli Hotel I was bringing in the tray with the tea and the breakfast. As I went to take the tray, my dhoti got caught on the door handle, and the whole thing started to unravel. I was feeling very awkward, but could do nothing, as I was holding the tray with the tea! Paramahamsaji moved



like lightning and for me the whole scene happened in slow motion. I was wondering what to do, but he was already there to assist and ensure that both dhoti and tea tray remained in place.

It changed my whole life

Sannyasin Dikshananda shares how she first came into contact with the yoga centre in Thessaloniki.

No matter how far he is, the master will appear in front of the disciple. This is the first teaching I learnt from Swami Satyananda through experience, before I was even aware of his existence or of Satyananda Yoga.

For some years, in search of something deeper, without knowing exactly what, I had been reading books by spiritual masters from various traditions. I also attended every lecture that a representative of these masters would give. I had been listening to beautiful truths, but that was as far as I could get. I was not experiencing them.

One day, I realized that although I was continuously reading massively important material, I was not changing at all. So I started praying spontaneously, in particular saying, "God, show me a path, just one specific path, in which I can actively participate." After

that, I kept aware, trying to catch a message from people, books, or television, and then I forgot to do so.

About ten or twelve days later, I was waking up from sleep, and a bright golden number appeared on my forehead, '283-109'. I wrote it down in order not to forget it. When I dialled the number on the same day, I was amazed and shocked by hearing a voice say, "Satyananda Yoga Centre Thessaloniki." I then understood that it was the answer to my prayer. I did not have a yoga centre in mind. I did not even know about it.

When I visited the centre for the very first time, I felt I was in my place. I learned that the inspirer and founder was Swami Satyananda, whom I did not know, as there were not any books of his at the bookstores in those days, and I understood that he sent me the number and the direction.

Since then the saying, "When the disciple is ready, the Master will appear" became the foundation of an unbreakable faith, as it was my experience, and after the experience it changed my whole life.

His words still echo within me

Sannyasi Layamudra describes her 1981 encounter with Swami Satyananda at the airport.

When I received my mantra and yogic name, my yoga instructor advised me to ask Swami Satyananda to give his energy to my mantra. I met him at the Greek airport in 1981 and, after a short chat, I wanted to check that my guru had done this. So I asked him, "Did you energize my mantra?" He replied, "I've done what I should do, but now you have to do the practice!" Even though so many years have passed, his



words still echo within me, keeping me aware of the importance of constant effort, living in the now, and doing rather than thinking.



Chronicles

Thessaloniki's first yoga centre was established due to the powerful inspiration of Swami Satyananda's first visit to that city. His presence in Thessaloniki left a deep imprint on the hearts of all who had the opportunity to hear him speak during the Pan-Hellenic Conference, 'Yoga and Health'. During the three-day conference, participants had direct contact with yoga through the presence of Swami Satyananda. Diksha was given on the last day. Swami Satyananda, accompanied by Swami Amritananda, returned to India after his time with us.

Yoga will unite all countries and all religions, and give a common practice for the improvements of the body, mind and emotion and inherent nature of man.

Swami Satyananda

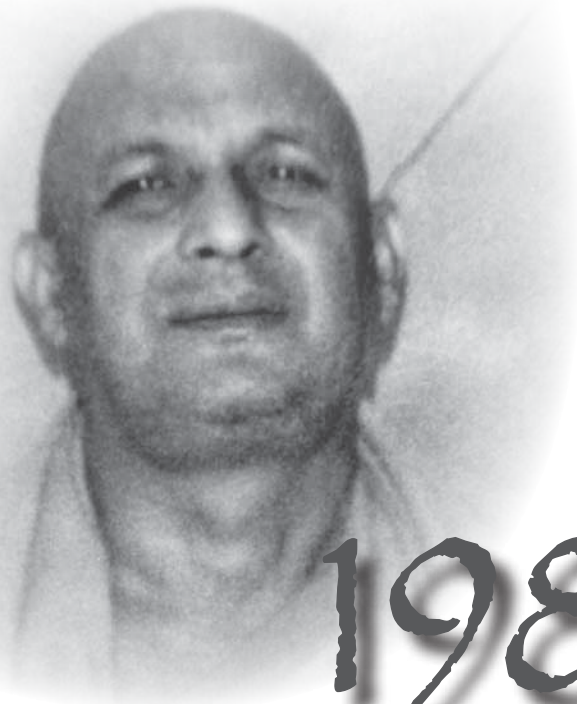
Greek Knowers of Truth: Seleucus

Seleucus I (358-281 BCE) was a Macedonian general and close companion of Alexander the Great. Following Alexander's death, Seleucus was appointed satrap (governor) of Babylon and later its king. As Seleucus I, he created the Seleucid dynasty, and his empire was one of the last bastions of Alexander's empire until the Romans. His conquests included Media and Persia, and he founded the cities of Antioch and Seleucia. During his reign he travelled to India and occupied land up to the Indus valley. Chandra Gupta Maurya (known in Greek as Sandra Kotos) was the emperor of the Indus valley. Seleucus began a campaign to overthrow Chandra Gupta. Although Seleucus was defeated, an alliance was forged between both leaders, and sealed with the first known marriages between Greeks and Indians. Seleucus despatched the ambassador, Megasthenes, to the court at Pataliputra (modern Patna), and records of this expedition are still in existence. He was assassinated by Ptolemy Ceraunus in 281 BC. His successor was his son Antiochus I.

Swami Satyananda on Seleucus and the links between India and Greece

The relations between Greece and India are rooted in remote history. More than three thousand years ago, our countries had a very great diplomatic, cultural and political relationship. Not only that, even marital relations took place between the people of Greece and the people of India, as when the daughter of Seleucus, the general of Alexander the Great, was married to Emperor Chandra Gupta. In India we know a great deal about your culture. I myself have studied Greek mythology. I've studied Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, and I personally feel that the people of India and the people of Greece are spiritually one unit. You may feel that you have a different religion, but in India we do not feel like that, therefore I told you in the beginning that I bring you the greetings of India.





1982

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Day-by-Day Itinerary

Swami Satyananda's European tour of 1982 encompassed Spain, England, Italy and Greece. He spent five days touring Athens and Thessaloniki. Swami Satyananda's return to Greece was eagerly anticipated. The impetus left in the wake of Swami Satyananda's last visit to Greece generated a deep inspiration and great momentum in the hearts of Greeks. Upon his return he inaugurated two

ashrams, one in Panorama, Thessaloniki, and the other in Pendeli, Athens. The media showed an avid interest in Swami Satyananda's tour in 1982.

That year Swami Satyananda was accompanied by Swami Satyasangananda Saraswati, better known as Swami Satsangi, who was soon to play a pivotal role in Swami Satyananda's mission. She received poorna sannyasa initiation on Guru Poornima in 1982 and from then on would always be seen by Swami Satyananda's side, in India and overseas.

Thursday, 30 September

- Press conference on 'Integral Yoga', Holiday Inn, Athens. All the major newspapers were present to hear Swami Satyananda address an eager crowd waiting to hear about the upcoming details of his seminars on integral yoga.
- From Athens, Swami Satyananda travelled to Thessaloniki. There he delivered Part I of the 'Integral Yoga' program at Kapsis Hotel.

Friday, 1 October

- Swami Satyananda gave satsang at the Electra Palace Hotel, Thessaloniki, followed by a press interview. He was asked to define yoga in a few words to which he gave the following reply: "The definition of yoga is to discipline the body, mind, emotions and intellect. We should understand that discipline also means proper training."

Saturday, 2 October

- This day marked Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, a fitting day for Swami Satyananda to inaugurate Satyanandashram—Panorama, Thessaloniki. At the end of the ceremonies, Swami Satyananda asked all the children present to gather around him and he took each one of them in his arms.

- Swami Satyananda returned to Athens to hold Part II of the discourse on 'Integral Yoga' at the Holiday Inn, Athens. Over a thousand people were present. Swami Satyananda explained that the integral yoga system consisted of four forms of yoga: karma yoga, the yoga of dynamism; bhakti yoga, the yoga of balanced emotions; raja yoga, the yoga of deeper mind; and jnana yoga, the yoga of the intellect.

Sunday, 3 October

- Discourse on 'Integral Yoga', Part III, Holiday Inn, Athens. Swami Satyananda elaborated further on the meaning of integral yoga and discussed in depth the relationship between mantra, mandala and yantra. This was followed by a television interview on YENED national television with Mr Economou in Athens.

Monday, 4 October

- Satsang and meeting with doctors, scientists, psychologists, parapsychologists, alternative therapists and yoga teachers at the Holiday Inn, Athens. Swami Satyananda discussed international research developments and how yoga postures influence physiology and psychology.
- Inauguration of the new Satyanandashram—Pendeli, Athens. The media was present during Swami Satyananda's inauguration speech.



Arrival Scenes, thessaloníkí airport, arriving from athens, 30 september, 1982



Press Conference

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Last week we set up a yoga centre in Thessaloniki and today we are starting this ashram at Pendeli. Swami Sivamurti and her companions have worked very hard to fulfil the expectations. This ashram should become a place where people should come all day, even if they are uninvited, and they should feel that this is their ashram, not our ashram.

Each and every item or money that comes to this ashram should be utilized for the dissemination and promotion of yoga. Many things, like drugs, should be kept out of bounds. I am not against anything in life and I know that man needs a little experience out of the ordinary, but still these things should not form a part of our tradition.

After some time we will also have an ashram exclusively for the training of swamis. When one wants to become a swami, first he must live in quarantine. The ashram, as we have it in Athens, is not quarantine.

The people who come to take sannyasa there have not dropped from heaven; they have come from your society. They carry with them all the infections of your society. Despite their best intentions and promises, sometimes they slip. It is not their fault. It is the fault of society. Sometimes, if sannyasins are not able to fulfil their spiritual obligations, the society must accept the responsibility. When sannyasins and swamis live in the ashram they see maya and when they go out of the ashram, they also see maya. Maya means an attractive delusion; although it is attractive it is not true, it is a delusion. This is maya. Therefore, there has to be an ashram where swamis can live for some time to cast off the infections they have brought from society. Even if one is not able to live the life of a swami for twenty or thirty years, at least one should experience it for, let's say, fifteen days. Once upon a time, there was a tradition; it was compulsory for everybody to live the life of a recluse for a minimum period of fifteen days. When you live the life of a sannyasin for a period of one month, two months, then you can know yourself better. So, we will have an ashram for swamis also.

Q. I understand and see that your pupils, your students are very happy to have you here, and I can say that we share their happiness. When did yoga start in Greece and how much response is there here?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga came to Greece in 1976 with one of my disciples, who was residing here. Since then a lot of work has taken place in this country, in Athens and in Thessaloniki, and everywhere else. Yoga is flourishing at a great speed in this country because Greek people seem to be very yoga-minded and they understand how yoga can relate to their mind, to their daily life, to their diseases, to their conflicts and their peace of mind.



Q. Could you explain to us what an ashram is?

Paramahamsaji: Ashram is a place where people come to live and develop spiritually. Where people come for yoga therapy and where people come in search of a master, a guru.

Q. Who gives you the title of a guru?

Paramahamsaji: It is the disciples who decide who will be their guru and they tell him. Then they address him as guru.

Q. Where and when did you get your education to become a guru?

Paramahamsaji: I lived with my guru, in Rishikesh, India, for twelve years, I studied with him, and there I got my titles.

Q. Could you tell us about a twenty-four hour day of a yoga guru? What does he do in twenty- four hours? Tell us about working, relaxing, eating, everything.

Paramahamsaji: Well, a guru is always in commune with the inner Self no matter where he is and what he is doing. We do all the work, at least myself. I travel all around the world throughout the year, but at all times I am in communication with my inner being. That is what a guru has to do.

Q. So, should we conclude that the inner being is some sort of a God in each one of you?

Paramahamsaji: Inner being is the purest awareness. It is the highest experience and it is the experience which includes both God and his creation.

Q. Don't the representatives of religions around the world see you as a threat to their religion? Don't they see you as someone who, because of your appeal, may take them on your side and make people leave their religion en masse?

Paramahamsaji: No, because I am not a religious man and I do not preach any religion. Therefore, nobody is afraid of me or scared of me. On the contrary, I have a lot of assistance and help from the religious people of every country, whether they are Protestants, Catholics, Sufis or Parsis. Everybody comes because they know I am not a threat to them. On the other hand, I teach everybody something by which they can practise their religion better.

Q. But you can achieve something that no religion can do. It is something good and that might be a threat to the established religions.

Paramahamsaji: Yes, but you know, I am from India, I am a Hindu, and the first thing that I learnt from my culture is, do not disturb anybody's religious philosophy or religious thinking. We do not believe in transformation or disturbing anyone's religion. I encourage people to stick to their own faith, to their own religion, to their own conviction, and listen to that.

Q. Do you ever get angry?

Paramahamsaji: Not now.

Q. If you did get angry, what would you do with your anger? Do you just sit and concentrate? But anyway, you said that you don't get angry. Thank you very much. We are now going to have a demonstration.

Paramahamsaji: First of all, I have one yoga posture to demonstrate, which will help those who get angry now and then. This posture is important for overcoming the passions of anger. You are seated in vajrasana. Now, raise both your hands over your head and breathe in. While breathing out, you move forward and place both the



palms and your forehead on the floor. You stay as long as possible, as long as you can, up to fifteen minutes if you want. After that, come back to the original position. First, with your hands above your head and then you can also practise this in a different way, by holding your wrist behind. Hold your wrists at the lower back and then bend forward. This yoga posture seems to be very simple, it is not an acrobatic feat, but it influences the adrenal gland. It releases the tension in the adrenal gland. As you have been practising a forward bending pose, you have to practise a backward bending pose also, known as, *supta vajrasana*. This counter-pose is important for those suffering from bronchitis, asthma and respiratory problems. Those who have a weak chest should practise this and those who have a slipped disc should also practise this asana.

— Press conference with Swami Satyananda at the inauguration of Satyanandashram, which was then in Pendeli, Athens, 4 October 1982

Integral Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

You know what I am going to talk about. Not because we are preaching yoga but because mankind throughout the world needs it. The need for yoga has arisen from the very facts which surround man's life today. We have never been apostles of yoga. We live our life in the solitary mountains in order to perfect our own mind and body, that is all. We never thought that in our life we would be preaching yoga to the rest of the world. In India we live very far from modern civilization, we have no ulterior motives in our life. The purpose for which we dedicated our lives many, many years ago was to realize the fountain of perfection within us.

The modern world did not leave us in peace, however. Doctors, scientists, scholars, philosophers, kept on chasing us. Thousands and thousands of young boys and



girls come to our country in search of peace and recovery of their identity. You cannot imagine how many millions of boys and girls, men and women from the modern society have come to my place, sleeping on the bare floor. The questions they asked were, "How can we obtain peace of mind?" "How can we realize our true nature?" We said to them questioningly, "But you have plenty in your country, you have affluence and security, you have everything that the body needs."

The need for yoga

This is the theme for tonight. Thousands of years ago India developed a science of life. This science of life was intended for a monk like me and a layman like you. Whether you are a great man or an ordinary man you face similar problems in life. The problems in the life of a theist and an atheist are not different. We all have the same mind, the same body and the same type of limitations.

Thousands of years ago India discovered the science of life known as yoga. Yoga means harmony, though everybody is in disharmony. Ask the doctors of psychology,

ask the great men who know about the mind, they will say that one hundred per cent of the human population is suffering from disharmony. That means everybody is in disharmony; one hundred out of one hundred have conflicts. There are only a few people on the face of this earth who don't have conflicts. There is hardly any personality beyond confusion, there is hardly anyone who is not a victim of tension, and this is the imbalanced personality of the human race.

Inner experience

Yoga is not a philosophy, it is a practical science. Philosophy gives you knowledge, yoga gives you experience. Every one of you knows what happiness is, but you have no experience. Everybody knows what peace of mind is, but they have no experience. The beauty of yoga is that it gives you experience. That experience is a manifestation of your inner being; so the process of yoga depends upon your own personality.

The main hypothesis of yoga is that what you are seeking in your life is in you and not outside. Do you need



Swami Satyananda at Kapsis Hotel, 30 September 1982

peace of mind? Search it out from within yourself. Do you want to be happy? Realize it within yourself. Happiness and unhappiness, both are expressions of your mind. When your mind is unrestrained you are unhappy, when your mind has a lot of turbulence you are unhappy, but when you control and concentrate your mind, you can experience happiness.

Yoga recognizes four facets of your personality. You have a body, emotions, intellect and you have a deeper mind. All these four constitute you and me. If you can develop all these four parts of your personality through yoga, then you can develop them in an integrated way. Therefore, the practices of yoga are constituted in a manner which can be helpful for these four facets of your personality.

Integral yoga

Even as you need different vitamins for the normal development of the various organs of your body, in the same way you need a synthesis of all the forms of yoga. It will not be possible for me to deal with all forms of yoga



tonight, but I will mention them and then talk about one or two systems. The integral yoga system consists of four forms of yoga. They are known as karma yoga, the yoga of dynamism; bhakti yoga, the yoga of balanced emotions; raja yoga, the yoga of deeper mind; and jnana yoga, the yoga of the intellect. These are the main faculties of yoga. Then there are the smaller ones and it is not possible for me to tell you all of that. I will just say a few things about hatha yoga and meditation.

It has been realized by the yogis that this physical body is very important for mental development. There are two forces which constitute this body, known as life and consciousness. When there is a balance between life force and the force of consciousness there is perfect health, but when there is an imbalance between them then you have physical diseases or mental diseases.



One of the most important forces in your body is called prana, the life force. This prana is not just oxygen or air which you breathe in, although it is present in your body in the form of oxygen. It can be compared to the energy flowing through electricity cables. Scientific investigations have measured the voltage of the energy in the body and it has been found that through the practice of pranayama you can increase the energy in the body.

The healing aspect

Due to faulty lifestyle and mistakes in thinking, many times this force of prana loses its highest frequency. This vital force, this life force penetrates the whole body, but if there is a block in its flow, then physical disease originates. Through the practice of yoga postures and breathing techniques you can increase the frequency of life force in the body. This is the reason why today, throughout the world, yoga postures and breathing techniques are used for curing many chronic and previously incurable diseases. The investigators are coming to the conclusion that most of the psychosomatic diseases can be effectively controlled by yoga postures and pranayama.

Hundreds of scientists are now working on this project. In America, in Europe, in India, in Japan and in Australia they are trying to study the effects of yoga postures on the human body and the effects of pranayama on the human mind. Throughout the world, yoga centres are now teaching yoga for what we call complete health. These yoga postures are known as asanas. In the West they are known as hatha yoga. Before the scientific investigations, people thought they were just exercises and it mattered little if you did yoga or went jogging or did other physical exercises, it was all the same. Now scientists say something else: that in all other practices you use maximum energy, maximum oxygen, you exert maximum pressure on your cardiovascular system, but in yoga you use minimum

energy, minimum oxygen and there is the least strain and stress on the coronary system.

They have also come to another conclusion, that the yoga system creates a balance in the endocrine system. By regulating certain endocrine secretions, asanas create an influence on the nature of disease. Therefore, disease born of hormonal deficiency can be perfectly checked through the practice of yoga postures. There are certain yogic postures which exert influence on the adrenal glands. As a result of this, adrenalin is produced to cope with diseases that are respiratory in nature, like asthma. There are certain yoga postures which improve the thyroid secretions and as a result of this you are able to maintain emotional balance during fear and anger. There are certain postures which improve the activity of the pancreas and so you can fight diabetes.

This is just a glimpse I am providing you with. I have found a system of my own for yoga therapy which is acceptable today throughout the world. I have been writing volumes and volumes of books on the scientific investigations of yoga. Therefore, all of you who are present here this evening should not feel that I am just giving tall talk.

Meditation

Now another force in the body is the mind. You can call it consciousness, mind or whatever you like. This mind is a great force, no doubt. It controls your body, it destroys your body, it kills a man, it spoils the family and it influences society. This mind is very powerful. It can make you great, it can make you wretched, and the most important thing in the life of man is that he does not know the mind.

What you know about the mind is not the mind. You know you are worried, you know you are angry, you know that you are remembering and you know that you are nervous. This is not the mind; this is the pattern of the mind. The light is not electricity; it is the manifestation of



electricity. Anger, passion or thought are not the mind. A little of the mind you know and the rest you do not. The mind is like an iceberg and only the tip is seen by man. You have to know the mind if you want to improve the quality of your personality, of your thinking, of your behaviour, and of your society. The most beautiful thing about yoga is that it gives you a glimpse of the total mind, but of course, gradually.

What is meditation? Just think about it, what is meditation? To close the eyes, to close the mind, to stop thinking? No, that is not meditation. Meditation is opening the doors to the mind. Meditation is diving deep into past, present and future. Even as you go into an ancient treasure house and see so many jewels there, in the same manner when you go into the mind you can find infinite faculties and infinite beauties.

This science of meditation has been perfected by the yoga system. As you go on successfully meditating, changes take place in the body also. I can give you a glimpse or idea about that; when you sit in the lotus posture with your spine upright and straight and with your eyes closed, what happens? They have found brain waves altering, oxygen



consumption changing; the respiratory system behaving differently, the metabolic rate and the metabolic process undergoing great change, and the muscles of the heart improving. They have also found changes in the rate of regeneration of cells of the body.

Mantra

Meditation can be practised by each and everybody, but of course in order to practise meditation you must have some sort of basis. The most important basis for successful meditation is sound. When you want to meditate, please remember that you will succeed only if you have a symbol for meditation. There are three symbols for meditation; one symbol is known as sound, the second symbol is known as yantra and the third symbol is known as mandala. These three form the basis for your meditation. Now, it is not necessary that you should have all the three symbols. I can tell you which is the best and the easiest for everyone. The best is the sound symbol.

This sound can be given a higher frequency, so much so that this sound can be transformed into explosive energy. You know there are various forms of energy in the universe: you know about electrical energy, you know about nuclear energy. I am talking about sound energy. This sound can be made very powerful. When it is repeated

and repeated and repeated, it attains a high frequency. Therefore, everybody who wants to achieve success in meditation must discover a sound for themselves. This sound is known as mantra in yoga.

Please do not misunderstand me. I do not mean a holy name. I am not dealing with a religious matter; I am just dealing with the phenomenon of sound. I know that even in modern science, sound can be made to pierce matter. Sound knows no barriers. Sound waves travel hundreds or thousands of kilometres across continents,

they can be transformed into electrical waves and again transformed into sound waves.

One must discover a mantra for oneself. The discovery of the sound depends upon one's quality of elements and you can realize the quality of your elements by your astrological sign. According to the astrological sign one has a sound for oneself. At this moment I cannot talk about this subject to a great extent.

The sound must be practised every morning and night when you listen to it with rapt attention for just ten



minutes. You should practise your mantra either audibly or mentally. Start with ten minutes in one stretch. When you begin, do it once a day and when you like it, later, practise twice a day. Whether your mind is calm or not, you should keep your body calm and quiet. The mind cannot become quiet in one day or even in one year. It is not even good to compel the mind to become quiet. In fact, in the beginning of your meditation your mind will purge more thoughts. If thoughts come into your mind you should not worry at all. You should be constant with the practice of the mantra, but at the same time you should not try to concentrate because sometimes when you try to concentrate you are creating unnecessary stress and strain.

Yantra and mandala

In order for you to concentrate it is necessary for you to choose another symbol for yourself. Mantra is not intended for concentration. Mantra is intended to facilitate a passage for concentration. Mantra purifies your consciousness, but for concentration you must have another kind of symbol. It should be either a yantra, a diagram, or it should be a mandala. If you do not know anything about yantra, please find out. It is a very powerful system for concentration. The yantra reaches the depths of consciousness without any difficulty and can permeate both your consciousness and dreams. Now remember what I said, mantra is not for concentration. If you try to concentrate during mantra you will have to face repressions. Let it take one or two or three years, but the mantra must purge more and more of your mental impurities. By constant practise of mantra the mind becomes tranquil and equipoised, then you should practise concentration on yantra.

There are many thousands of yantras and you can choose any one of them. The science of mantra and the science of yantra are very old. Every culture of the world:

Aryans, Babylonians, Egyptians and the pre-Hellenic cultures, knew all about it, and the Kabbalists among the Jews knew about it very well. They knew the power of the mind and that the mind can make life hell or heaven. It is precisely for this reason that people all over the world want to practise yoga.

Tonight it is definitely not possible to teach you all about yoga, but it is my humble submission to all of you here that for yourself, for your coming generation, for

posterity, you must yourself discover the science of yoga. It will not interfere with your modern way of life, your system of thinking or your religion. It will not interfere with your culture, for yoga has two important qualities: it is a curative science and it is a creative science. Curative science because it cures the ailments of your body and a creative science because it improves the quality of your thinking.

—Discourse at Kapsis Hotel, Thessaloniki,
30 September 1982



Press Interview

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Yoga has become so popular that there are training centres throughout the world in the thousands. In the last few years, apart from hatha yoga, another aspect of yoga has received prominence and that is the yoga of meditation. Formerly, we thought yoga was shutting down the mind, but now psychologists, psychotherapists and the thinking people say that meditation is not shutting the mind but it is opening the mind. The latest researches in science have shown that during the practice of meditation the body becomes totally balanced. Various forms of yoga have received the attention of humanity. In Russia the parapsychological aspect of yoga is receiving attention, in Japan the physical aspect, in the US the science of meditation and in Australia, practically all the aspects of yoga.

Q. Lately we can see from the people that there is an interest in yoga. Why does this happen? Is it because it is a special time for yoga or because it is being presented in a better way?

Paramahamsaji: I think yoga has been presented in a better way by a better quality of people. It is also because today the situation all over the world is full of stress, strain and tension. In a society which is affluent and full of excitement, yoga is necessary to balance the life principle.

Q. In Greece another Satyananda centre has opened and so there is activity in Greece, but how does this compare with other European countries?

Paramahamsaji: The picture of yoga is very bright in western European countries: well-organized, well-

disciplined and well-defined. Yoga teaching is a career there, recognized by the Department of Education and Social Welfare. In the eastern European countries, the research on yoga is done on a very scientific scale.

In Greece, people are greatly enthusiastic about yoga. I have addressed dozens of crowded meetings here in the last few years. Last year in Thessaloniki, there were thousands of people in one place and the hall was jam-packed. I find the people of this country can understand the spirit of yoga very well in relation to life. What is needed is facilities to teach them and opportunities to expose them to yoga. Our centre which was started in Athens is very popular and is doing good work.

Q. Could we hear more about the breathing techniques which affect the nervous system?

Paramahamsaji: In yoga the breathing techniques are known as pranayama. They are the breathing techniques which have to be practised every morning for ten or fifteen minutes, and the practices should be done on an empty stomach after clearing the bowels. Breathing practices are threefold: inhalation, retention, exhalation.

The breathing has to be done with alternate nostrils. For example, you should first breathe through the left nostril, then retain the breath for a while, then exhale through the right nostril. Again inhale through the right





Press interview , Electra Palace Hotel, Thessaloniki, 1 October 1982

nostril, retain the breath for a while, and exhale through the left. This is one type of breathing exercise. Breathing has to be done as slowly and as mildly as possible. When you practise, the important thing is that you have to maintain the spine upright and straight, and for the duration of the practice the body should remain immobile and the eyes closed.

The practice is done in stages. In the final stage you have to maintain a ratio between inhalation and exhalation, that is, the period of exhalation should be twice the period of inhalation. This practice particularly improves the cardiovascular activities. It has been found that there are certain pranayama practices which improve the health of the coronary muscles and this practice is important in that it maintains a balance between the input and output of the heart. If the heart is not able to clear out the blood at the same rate as it rushes in, then you feel heaviness and pain there.

Due to faulty living, sometimes the valves of the heart become narrow and constricted. When you practise pranayama this improves the two pathways of the heart, the auricle and the ventricle. There are also pranayamas which improve the quality of circulation. Many times your body is lazy and the circulation is sluggish, so you do not feel well mentally and physically. If this is the case, then you need the pranayamas which affect the circulation. In this way, you have many breathing techniques intended for many purposes.

Q . What is the psychological aspect of yoga?

Paramahansaaji: The mind can do more than thinking. When you can increase the frequency of

the mental waves it can function efficiently. When your mind is turbulent it misses many judgements. When you can restrain your thoughts then the mind can emit high frequency waves. I can give you a simple example. Two people can sit together in one room, practise restraint on the thinking process, create void in the mind. As you are able to create the void, thoughtlessness, the brain waves, the mental waves, attain very high frequencies. After that, if you think something, the next man is going to think exactly that. This is called thought transference.

In yoga there is a branch that believes that the mind is more capable than you know. A lot of work has already been done on this all over the world, including Soviet Russia. I think it is not very hard for the Greek people to believe this because much of it is already present in your culture. What you need is the right type of practices taught by your teacher.

In this particular context I will just cite one experiment. This is an authentic experiment where, seven years ago, two people practised thought transference under controlled conditions. First they practised at a distance of one metre. When they succeeded they increased the distance until finally the distance was one thousand six hundred miles and both the subjects were in Faraday's cages where electromagnetic and radio waves cannot penetrate, but thought waves could. This is a very important experiment, documented and conducted under controlled conditions. It also means that by restraining the thought process and concentrating the mind you can achieve great results with the mind.

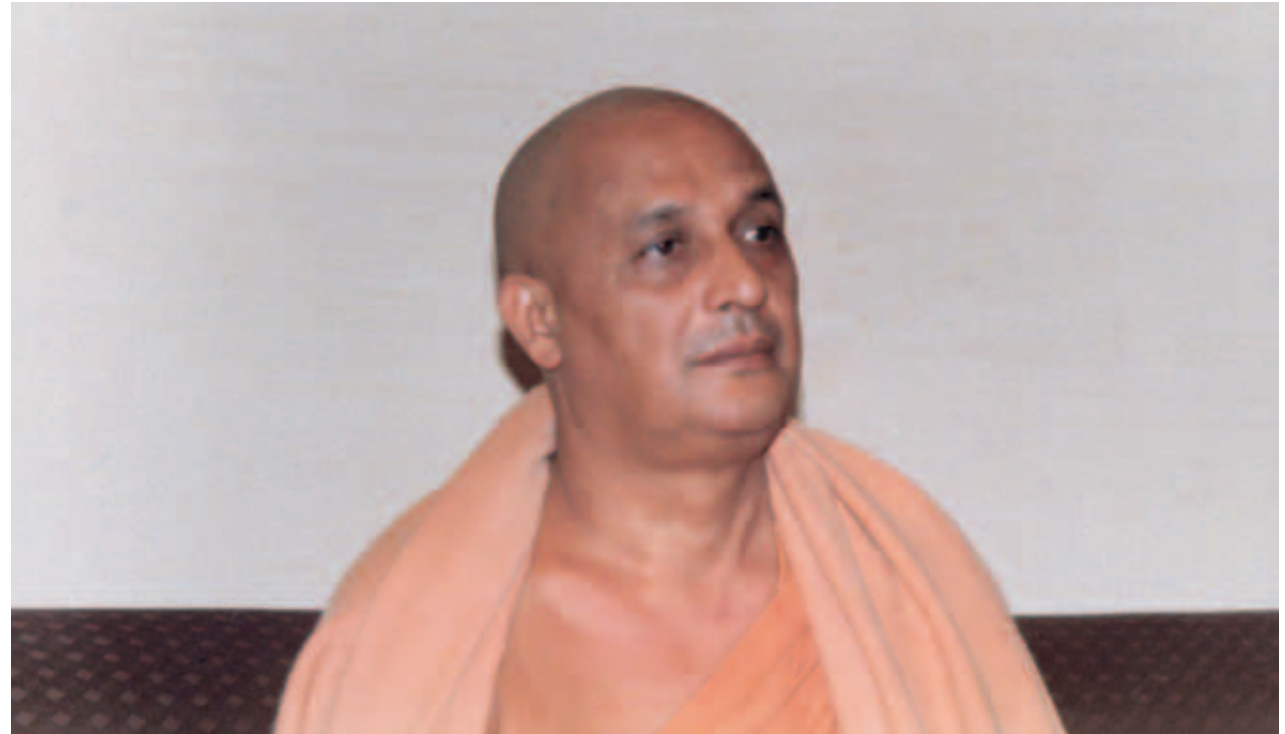
—*Hotel Holiday Inn, Athens, 30 September 1982*

Press Interview

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

In the latter part of the century, a lot of changes have taken place and are taking place practically everywhere in the world. Technology has reached a point where it is creating a lot of problems in man's personal life. Apart from pollution and mental strain, it has drained the philosophy of man completely. People have started wondering about an alternate way of life and thinking, and this is going to be the way of life in the century that is coming. Many thinkers have been paying attention to this issue. Most of these thoughts and philosophies have emanated from the East, but people have found them to have very little practical value.

The travelling westerners in India discovered a wonderful way of living and thinking, but it is only in the last four decades that yoga has caught the attention of serious-minded people of the West. Great psychologists like Paul Roe and others made thorough studies in yoga. Philosophers, psychologists and social thinkers were



immensely impressed by yoga, but recently another wave has taken the world by surprise. One comes from Soviet Russia and the other from the technological West. The investigations in Russia proved that yoga has much to offer in relation to the evolution of the human mind. The scientific investigations in the West have revealed that yoga can be used for the treatment of many 'incurable' diseases. This discovery has taken everybody by surprise.

Now, thousands of yoga clinics have opened throughout the world. It is of course not a matter of belief or faith, for yoga is a science which is totally analytical. You don't have to believe but you can investigate. At the same time, it is necessary for us to educate the public about yoga, especially in countries like Greece, where religion is

predominant. Therefore, we have been going to different countries and talking to people about yoga.

You can talk to anyone, anywhere about yoga; he will never say it is bad. Particularly in the West, the world has been educated to understand yoga as a benevolent science. To that end they have introduced it in many walks of life. In some countries they are teaching yoga to inmates of mental hospitals and to mentally-challenged children in order to improve their brain. In some countries they are teaching yoga to rehabilitate people from drug addiction. Some countries have started teaching yoga to school children for better discipline. So it is necessary that this country also knows what is happening in the world concerning yoga,



Press interview, 1 October 1982, Electra Palace hotel, Thessaloniki

and that there are many types of sicknesses which can be really inexpensively treated by yoga.

It is not my assertion; it is the conclusion of the scientific investigations in modern countries. Medical science is asking seriously whether yoga is only preventative, promotive, or curative science, and doctors are working to answer this. In many countries the church or the religious institutions have also adopted yoga in their monastic and traditional systems. Buddhist monasteries in Japan, Roman Catholics in South America and Muslims in the Middle-Eastern countries are showing a keen interest in yoga precisely because yoga is a science and not a religion.

Q. Can you define yoga in a few words?

Paramahamsaji: The definition of yoga is to discipline the body, mind, emotions and intellect. We should understand that discipline also means proper training.

Q. There seems to be a phenomenon that many people think that yoga is some kind of a religion and not, as you mentioned, a science.

Paramahamsaji: Yoga is not a religion because the most important thing in religion is God; if there is no God there is no religion. The traditional philosophy of yoga is atheistic. Religion talks of God, paradise, sin, punishment, salvation, doomsday; these aspects more or less define religion. Yoga does not understand paradise, it talks about a better mental state; it doesn't talk about God at all, it talks about the possibility of being master of yourself. According to yogic philosophy, man can direct his destiny according to his mental capacity.

The purpose of yoga is to make you capable of living a better life here. There are many factors that I could discuss which go to prove that all that there is in religion is not in yoga at all. The yogic texts do not talk about God. They don't deny God, they don't even discuss God.

Yoga is like a science, like chemistry, botany, biology. I do believe in God, that's a different matter. If you teach yoga you may believe in God, but God has nothing to do with your teaching. A professor of nuclear physics may believe in God, but that has nothing to do with nuclear physics. A professor of psychology may believe in God, or may go to church or the temple, but that has nothing to do with what he is teaching. If I am a man representing a religion does not mean that what I am teaching is a religion. To say that another way, a theist may teach the Bible, but he needn't become a Roman Catholic. This should be very clear to you about religion and science.

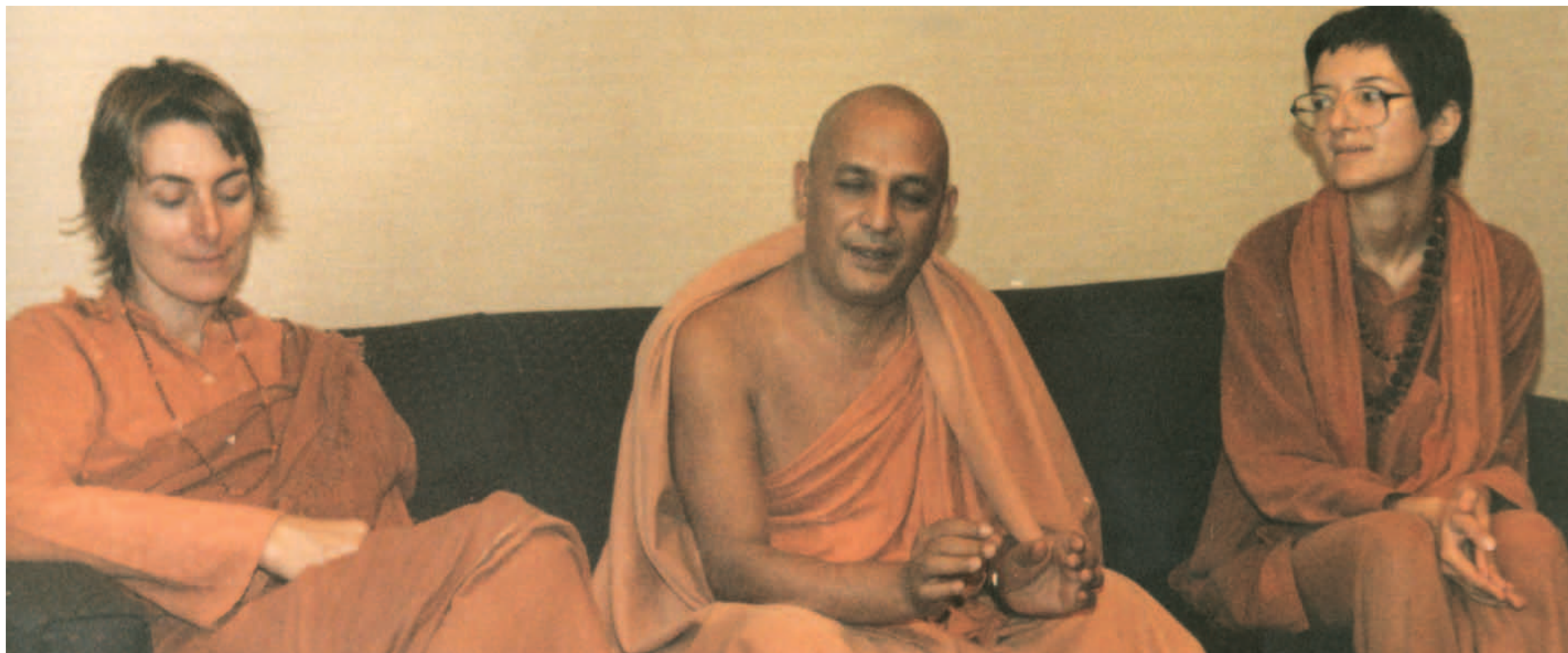
The most important thing is: religion is based on belief, yoga is based on analysis. If you ask a person who believes in religion to prove his faith he will say, "It is written in the book", but if you ask a yogi to prove something, he will say, "You go and check it. If it is wrong, reject it." That's the basic difference.

Q. It was mentioned before that man can arrange and control his destiny with yoga, but this seems to be contrary to what religion believes.

Paramahansaji: No, many religions believe in a personal way. According to the basic tenets of Christianity, Islam,

Hinduism and Judaism, the four God-fearing religions, man is not a total puppet. He can change much of his destiny by the gift of willpower that God has provided him with. They say that God has created man in his own image. They also say that the relationship between man and God is according to man's achievements, that at the highest level of mental development "I and my Father are one." At a humble point in a very weak man, at a lower point of the mind, "I am here; my Father is in heaven." There is no real contradiction so far as man's conquest of destiny is concerned.

— *Electra Palace Hotel, Thessaloniki, 1 October 1982*



Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. Can one become a swami without becoming sensitive?

Paramahamsaji: What does the word swami mean? The word swami means 'master of his own self'. So how to become a swami? It is a good question but a difficult question.

In western countries, we people are misunderstood because we are equated with priests. Priests belong to a religion; they are loyal to one religion. We are not priests because we do not teach religion. For us every religion is fit for reverence. We work for every religion. Then there are the people known as monks. Monk means 'mono'. We are neither priests nor monks. We do not belong to a religious order nor do we belong to a sect.

In order to become a swami you must train your mind. You must be able to understand your mind and live with a guru for some time. If you cannot live with a guru you cannot become a swami. Not only a swami but everybody must be patient with life. In your everyday life you are facing onslaughts on your mind, and your mind gets hurt and wounded every now and again. Even a little thing disturbs you very much. Do you not know that pain and pleasure follow man like a shadow? Do you not know that disease and death are the inevitable destinies of everybody? Do you not know that everybody who has come down will be criticized? They are such natural laws that man has to accept them. Then why do we shout and wail and scream? Why can't we balance our mind in both situations? When pleasures come you say, "Welcome". When pains come to you, you say, "Get out." Why all this?



Can you eradicate death? Therefore, a wise man behaves in a balanced way in this drama of life. If you want to win this battle of life, you must know how to be balanced, and everybody has to learn how to be balanced in life. When you are able to balance your mind in the natural situations of life, then you can get to higher spiritual life.

Our training is defective and therefore our children don't know how to face life when they grow up. Perhaps you know the rate of suicide in the Scandinavian countries? They have so much prosperity, so much money, why should they commit suicide? Just because of how they are feeling about a little, very insignificant thing.

Very insignificant affairs of life disturb their mind and they commit suicide. Husband and wife fight with each other; it's very natural that a husband and wife should fight. The husband takes a revolver and shoots himself because he cannot understand the natural law which takes place between husband and wife. Not only this kind of suicide, but people become very unhappy, they take to drugs, they become alcoholics and they become depressed. Is this the way we understand the laws of nature related to our life?

A swami has to be one who is a master of his own mind and situations. You should not misunderstand and think that a swami is just a religious priest. Priests are wise

people. They have a lot of knowledge, but they are human beings. They cannot sustain the kicks of life. They cannot maintain balance in adverse situations, but if they can they are not priests, they are swamis.

You are a householder, you have a family, but if you are wise and are able to handle the situations of life and have mastered your own mind, you are a swami. Therefore, all of us must aspire to be swamis and for this you must have a guru who will inspire you from time to time. Besides one's own religion, one needs inner inspiration.

Q. How do we cope with insomnia?

Paramahansa ji: Insomnia is a symptom which is also responsible for many ailments in the physical body. When one is suffering from insomnia one should understand that one has something wrong in one's body, and later this will develop into something else. The digestive system is upset by insomnia. Then there are diseases due to malnutrition. Those people who are not able to sleep properly often have a bad liver. In the course of time, insomnia disturbs the normal function of the system and when the nervous system is disturbed you are not able to cope with your day-to-day work. You get tired and exhausted.

In the modern system, when one is suffering from insomnia one is usually given sleeping pills. The sleeping pills give relief no doubt, but they do not eradicate the cause of the problem. Quite often the malfunctioning of hormones in the body is responsible for insomnia. For example, if there is malfunctioning of the adrenal gland then you suffer from anxiety neurosis. Many times you will have noticed that when you are worried about some aspect of your life, then you have the symptoms of insomnia. Therefore, it is very necessary that people must know how to sleep well naturally. In this respect, yoga plays a vital role.

There are many practices of yoga which lead to a good sleep. In the brain there are frequencies known as brain waves. At different times these waves keep on changing. You have delta waves, theta waves, alpha and beta waves and these waves indicate the electrical frequencies operating inside the brain. It is necessary to bring down the high frequency of the brain, especially at night. When the frequencies in the brain become minimal then there is



minimal activity in the body and the consumption of oxygen also falls to a minimum. When you sleep well you conserve more energy for the next day. When you cannot sleep in the night you are using oxygen, therefore the oxygen will be depleted when you are supposed to work. If you read the scientific manuals on yoga you will come to realize one important point: in yoga you use minimum oxygen.

In yoga, sleep is considered to be very important because according to yogic philosophy, sleep is not a passive state. During deep sleep the individual becomes very dynamic on the unconscious plane and he is very close to his inner being. That is the exact reason why sleep gives you so much energy, so much freshness and so much bliss. In deep sleep there is only a veil between you and your inner being, therefore you must know how to sleep well. It is precisely for this reason that yoga has designed certain disciplines.

The first discipline in yoga regarding insomnia is that you should not sleep with a loaded stomach. When you go to bed, your stomach must be empty. If there is food in the stomach at night then there is the possibility of hyperacidity and fermentation. As a result of the presence of food in the stomach, you have strange schizophrenic dreams which disturb the sleep. Therefore, the minimum time difference suggested in yoga between your dinner and going to bed is three hours. This difference of three hours is for vegetarians. For non-vegetarians it should be more than three; it should be five hours.

The second discipline is when you go to bed, you must lie down on your left. Some people prefer to sleep flat on the back, others prefer to sleep on the right and many people sleep on the stomach. These three positions are not regarded as scientific. Except in exceptional cases you should try to avoid these three. Those who are suffering from slipped disc or sciatica, should sleep on the stomach, but for the average person it should be on the left side because that works the heart to the minimum.

The third discipline is, before going to bed, you must sit down for ten to twenty minutes. Even if you are tired, you must sit down before sleeping. It is not only for those who are suffering from insomnia, it is meant for



all of us, even for me, because when you go to bed the subconscious mind comes into the forefront. You begin to worry at that time. You begin to remember all that is not necessary. You make castles in the air. You get into impossible fantasies. So much so that you cannot sleep and you go on changing your position: right, left and both, then get up for a while and smoke a little and then take a little tea or coffee. Then it is two o'clock in the morning. This happens with most people. Nobody wants it but still they have it because they do not know that sleep is a mental condition affecting the body.

Sleep is not a physiological condition affecting the mind. Sleep is a mental condition, and the concentration should be in the form of a mantra. You must repeat your mantra and if you do not have a mantra chant Om, as Om is the universal sound. Or you can just chant Jesus, Jesus. Or you can go on chanting Guru, Guru. Whatever it is you must have a name which will create tranquillity, peace and unity in the mind before you are about to sleep. It is also good to have a small mala of twenty-seven beads without a stop in between. Usually the malas have a stop in between, called sumeru, 'the top', but the malas which

you use in the night before going to bed should not have that interruption.

Now, there is a fourth important discipline, the practice known as yoga nidra. It is one of the most powerful methods ever known to mankind. Before I go on to tell you about yoga nidra, I will tell you something else. In 1968 I approached the government of India for a research grant. They granted me money for research for a period of five years. During this period we taught yoga nidra to more than one thousand patients suffering from coronary diseases. You will be surprised to know that the results were fantastic and they were beyond even my expectations. I have a good friend in India. He is an eminent cardiologist and he teaches yoga to his patients who are suffering from hypertension. During the course of his profession he has found that yoga nidra has been able to help these people immensely.

The practice of yoga nidra can be done first with the help of a teacher. What is the practice of yoga nidra? In the physical body you have many parts like the thumb and the fingers, the lips and the nose, the hip and waist, your big and small toes. You have seventy-six centres in the external body. These centres have a counterpart in the gyrus of the brain and when you think about one, then the second or third part of the body, a certain sensation is created. This sensation is in the form of a feeling and is carried to the remotest centre in the brain gyrus. As soon as this sensation is communicated to the brain gyrus, relaxation takes place immediately. It is not necessary to even concentrate on the organs; it is enough if you just feel them.

This practice was discovered by me while studying tantra. In those days I used to practise the tantric rituals and in these tantric rituals that I was performing there were many things that I could not understand. One of the

rituals is, you touch the thumb, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, fifth finger, palm, right eye, left eye, nose and I did not know why I was to practise this. Whenever I used to practise the feeling of the different parts of the body according to the tantric ritual, I used to feel a sort of drowsiness as if I had taken a sleeping pill.

I then studied biology, anatomy, and the medical sciences and I realized that it was necessary for me to tell people that by thinking of the different organs in the body you can create tranquillity and sleep in your body. There is a simple experiment you can do by yourself. Lie down in the pose of relaxation and keep on thinking of your ten fingers, then ten toes and other organs of the body one by one. You will never know when you finished them. This is the practice of yoga nidra.

Before you practise yoga nidra there is another important practice which I want to suggest for the people who are suffering from insomnia. Before you go to bed at night, light a candle so that the flame of the candle is not much higher than the level of your eyes, and the flame of the candle should not flicker. You gaze at the flame of the candle without blinking the eyes for as long as possible, then close the eyes. After closing your eyes concentrate on the mid-eyebrow centre and try to visualize the counter-effect of the light on the retina. Do it a few times, then practise your japa, practise your mantra. Then lie down flat on your back and practise a little bit of yoga nidra and you'll have sound sleep.

I have written a book on yoga nidra. It has been translated into nearly all the important languages of the world, including Greek, and you can know more about yoga nidra from that book. It is not only for good sleep that you must know yoga nidra, but you must learn yoga nidra in order to learn more when you are sleeping. You must learn yoga nidra in order to change your negative

habits, if you have any, and you must practise yoga nidra in order to improve your willpower. I hope my reply to your question will help you.

Q. Please talk a little more about mandala.

Paramahansaji: The topic is very good, but it needs a little introduction because for many people mandala doesn't mean anything. In tantric tradition there are three basic elements for expanding the mind. What is expanding the mind? When you are able to know beyond this objective world, that is called expanding the mind. It is a fact that you can improve your mind. For this you need three basic points. You can expand your mind by mantra, yantra and mandala. Mantra is sound, yantra is diagram and a mandala is form. It can be a human form, an animal form or an object which has three dimensions.

An idol is a mandala, any form which you draw is a mandala, a picture or a photograph is a mandala, a tree or a mountain is a mandala. There are two-dimensional mandalas and there are three-dimensional mandalas. A photo or picture is a two-dimensional mandala and there are three-dimensional mandalas, which have a very deep effect on the human mind.

Mandala can be translated as a pictorial conception or object conception. Dr Sigmund Freud translated it as 'pictorial conception', but later other psychologists like Carl Jung, Adler, and Paul Roe called it 'object conception'. Why do we use mandala, yantra and mantra? It is not possible for me to elaborate on the whole thing, but as an illustration I can tell you that I have a very talented disciple in Switzerland. He is a school teacher and teaches mentally-challenged children. He has been doing this work for many years. After he came in contact with me I told him to expose these children to yantras and mandalas. Since he was my disciple he

did this experiment. You will be surprised to know that within one year the IQ level of the children improved by seventy-five per cent. IQ means intelligence quotient, it is called an intelligence test through which we can assess the development of the brain.

In the brain there are millions and billions and trillions of archetypes, responsible for your intelligence and brilliance. When you practise concentration on mandala as well as on yantra, these archetypes explode like bombs. You have a lot of experiences in the mind, you feel sensations in the spine, you feel a burning sensation at the root of the spine, you see a lot of visions. This is called the working out of archetypes, therefore everyone should have one mandala for concentration.

If you want to know more about it you will have to read authentic translations of tantric books. I do not know of any such texts in Greek as yet, but they have been translated into French, German and many other languages. This process or mandala can also be used in psychotherapy. In fact, if you want to improve the intelligence of your children you must train them through mandalas. You must allow your children especially to concentrate on some form that you keep for them in one corner of the room every morning. These children, in the course of time, will develop a photographic system in the brain, then they will become geniuses in society.

Thinking is not the ultimate achievement of mankind. I hope you are listening to me carefully. Thinking is not the ultimate achievement of mankind, feeling is not the ultimate achievement of mankind, remembering is not the ultimate achievement of mankind, and logic is not the ultimate achievement of mankind. The ultimate achievement of mankind is to be able to see an object in the mind as clearly as it is outside. When you close your eyes, can you see me as clearly as you can see me

now? How long can you see me for? Can you see me like this for one second? That's achievement; but if you can see me with eyes closed as clearly as when I'm here, for some period of time, say ten minutes, you're fantastic. Not just feeling, seeing. You see a separate reality within yourself. I'm a reality, but when you think about me in your mind that is not a reality, that's just feeling. When you can see me in your mind exactly as I am here, that is called 'separate reality'. That is the ultimate capacity that the mind can achieve. If you are such a man then you can go anywhere, you are brilliant. Brilliant as a poet, brilliant as an artist, brilliant as a musician, brilliant as a politician, a writer, a scientist, because you can see things within you. This is the importance of mandala in the development of your mind.

Q. What is the way for someone to learn tantra?

Paramahansaji: In order to learn tantra it is very necessary that you first understand what it is. It is not possible for me to tell you everything about it. The main hypothesis of tantra is as follows: whoever you are, you can become spiritual. You need not fight with your mind, you need not change yourself, but just do certain practices every day. Your relationship with your family and children is not against spiritual life. Matrimonial relationships should not be abandoned.

What is necessary? Certain practices. This, in short, is the way of tantra. Yoga is an offshoot of tantra, but tantra is a little more than yoga and it is necessary for one to know about it and then to learn this from a teacher. The most important practices of tantra are: kriya yoga, number one; hatha yoga, number two; mantra yoga, number three and laya yoga, number four. These are the basic practices of tantra.

—Satsang at Hotel Nepheli, Thessaloniki, 1 October 1982



Inauguration Speech at the New Ashram

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

For the yoga-minded people of Thessaloniki and for me, it is a very important event for us to be instrumental in this inauguration. Ashrams are necessary for the modern world because the yoga-minded people want to have an opportunity to learn and to live.

Revolution

It was in 1968 that I went on a world tour for the first time. I soon realized that people everywhere in the world are searching for themselves. It was at that time that the wave had already started in the West. That was the time when the whole of the West was passing through a phase of transition. This transition was a result of great frustration. After a century and a half, or even more, of the industrial revolution, people in the West were facing a great crisis in their personal lives.

Initially they had had great faith in this technology. They thought it would bring them nearer to peace and happiness. They thought and anticipated that this would bring nations and families closer, that technology would bring people into one fold, but all their dreams appeared

to be shattered. Technology brought them stress and strain, split the families, disturbed the social system, took man far away from himself, created turbulence in his mind, made him more selfish, made him more self-centred. It was at that time that the hippy wave erupted and rebelled against society.

Of course I'm not going to tell you that it was a very happy movement because that was the deepest agony of society that erupted in the form of hippies. The hippies did not come up from hell nor did they come down from heaven; they were our own products. We created them. The repressed society exploded all at once and the whole technological West was waiting for direction.

When the society in the West could not give direction, nor the politicians, nor religion, then there was a social revolution. The hippies were a product of that revolution. The drug cult was a product of that revolution.

Personal responsibility

Nobody makes hippies, nobody takes drugs; we do it. If your family is in a state of disturbance the same thing will happen. The world is a very big family. Your family is a microscopic family. The whole world is a macrocosmic family. It does not merely subsist on prosperity, it does not merely subsist on a political system or on a good market; it has to rely on a sound philosophy. This philosophy is not something that people talk about around a table. This philosophy has to be intimate with everybody, not only your monk or your priest, but also your father has to become a philosopher. Even a criminal has to become a philosopher, a politician, an ordinary labourer in the street or a scavenger has to become a philosopher. If you have monks and priests who are masters of philosophy, that has nothing to do with society. If you do not have a philosophy then your children will revolt.





The mission

It was during that period of revolt that I was touring the world. I sensed that the whole modern world was undergoing a state of frustration. At this time, what had India to offer? Of course the West has offered a lot of things, but whatever the western culture has offered, it has been to the external man. It has offered him a nice bed and bedroom but no sleep; it has offered social security but no emotional security. There are two parts to your life.

You are an external man and at the same time you are an internal man. All of your external, necessary needs are looked after by the modern culture, but the soul is completely and totally ignored. Many of you may be going to a sanctum sanctorum weekly or even daily, but that is not enough for the inner man.

I began to question what India has to offer to the western people. I travelled far in the eastern countries and also to Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Tahiti, Hawaii, America, Europe, Africa, the Middle-East and the European

countries, and I came to a conclusion. That conclusion was that India has perhaps the most important thing known as yoga. If India could give this yogic way of life to the rest of the world, there would be a great satisfaction.

Yoga

My calculation turned out to be precise. The West may or may not acknowledge this offering, and we Indians don't really care about that, but surely yoga has penetrated into the depths of their lives, brought them closer to their own religion, given a better understanding of their own cult, brought them closer to their family members. What is more important is the internal and external man are going to be integrated.

Since then I've been touring the world almost every month. Yoga schools have sprung up in different lands and yoga ashrams have been founded. In the beginning I had some difficulty from a certain section of society, but now things are very good. Doctors and scientists, engineers and professors, politicians and students, everybody is talking about yoga. It is with this feeling that this ashram comes together today.

Mahatma Gandhi

It is a coincidence that today is also the birthday of India's greatest modern man, Mahatma Gandhi. Those of you who know about him need not be told, but those of you who do not, should know that a completely unbelievable character



of a man lived in your world. You couldn't believe that such a man could walk upon earth; a man who hated none, a man who feared none, a man who was full of compassion, love and understanding. He lived a life of discipline and austerity throughout. When he made a mistake he confessed it, not before God but before the public. It is easy to confess your sins before God. It is easy to confess your mistake or crime in front of an altar, but if you commit a murder or a sexual crime, if you steal somebody's property, can you make a public confession in a public newspaper? So, today is his birthday and today is also the birthday of your ashram here.

The early ashram

In 1964, I founded a small ashram in India. It was much smaller than this, only four rooms, and the property was one-tenth of this, but that ashram became the heart and inspired thousands of people around the world. Today it is not that small ashram. Today it is the biggest yoga ashram in the world. It can house seven hundred and fifty students with about forty staff and teachers. The ashram is working on many lines. People come there for treatment, for spiritual illumination, for sadhana and relaxation, from all countries and religions: Hindus, Muslims, Christians, including Communists. It is because yoga has given them something positive and something substantial.

In the beginning I would have fifteen-day courses. I was the teacher and I was the cook and I was the guru. Many times I got very tired because people would come in such numbers. Now, of course, I am free of that difficulty. Later, I had a three-month training course for teachers, then I had a one-month Teacher Training Course. This one-month course became very popular. In the last few years we have produced thousands of teachers in India at least. Then I started yoga therapy courses. These courses were stretched from one week to an indefinite period and are now attended by people from every part of the world.



People suffering from arthritis, rheumatism, diabetes, blood pressure, all go there. Women suffering from amenorrhea, dysmenorrhoea, prolapse, also go there. More people come from the West because in the western countries people are scared of drugs. They do not want hormone injections or too many antibiotics because the research scholars say that if you take more of these hormones and antibiotics, it will create other diseases in the body.

Pure living

There are many people who go to the ashram to live in pure surroundings. In that town you do not have factories, you do not have rows and rows of motor cars, bars and

pubs. We do not have any nightlife. After eight o'clock we are with our families: husband, wife, children. After eight o'clock they are together, by nine o'clock they are snoring, by three o'clock they are up. At four o'clock they take a bucket and go and bathe in the Ganga in the open; men, women and children together. A bathroom is not necessary. They walk one or two miles every morning, by five-thirty they come back. That is the life there.

The ashram is situated on a small hillock, surrounded by the river Ganga like a garland. This is the concept of the ashram and such ashrams should be built throughout the world. Many times people come to the ashram with different diseases and they get better, because we have



an atmosphere, a discipline, a type of food and a program. We don't have medicine because it is not necessary.

Health and the mind

Diseases in the modern world are produced by the mind, not by bacteria and viruses. They talk about infections, but they forget that thought is the greatest virus and thought can even affect your adrenalin and enzyme secretion. The force of anxiety can cause a heart attack. A sudden thought of anxiety can cause colitis. Unbalanced emotions can cause asthma, respiratory diseases. Unsystematic and undisciplined life and food can cause peptic ulcers, gastric ulcers, duodenal ulcers. If a thought keeps coming into your mind, if a voice keeps coming into your mind every now and then, it can affect the skin surface and cause eczema.

Thoughts are even more contagious than external viruses. You have so much pollution in the West: air pollution, water pollution, food pollution, sound pollution, habit pollution and thought pollution. Now don't think that this is the only cause of disease. It's true that disease also originates from external sources. If you drink infected water you get bacilli and later dysentery; if you eat stale

food you can get sick, but why do you get sickness in the West? Everything is inspected by the health inspector, standards are checked, food is untouched by hands, but still there are diseases. It means that it is necessary to control the mind and its effects.

Harmony in society

So now, this ashram has come into being. Ashrams should be maintained by the people here. They have to find a method, a system. It's very difficult for ashrams to survive here. In India it is very easy for ashrams to survive because we know they are necessary for a healthy society. There should be seminars, classes, gatherings and get-

togethers and this place must be utilized for the common good of the people. Not only you, but your friends and acquaintances should spend more and more time in the ashram atmosphere and receive inspiration from the ashram. Of course the teacher who will be here will have certain limitations, but still I believe that the teacher will be able to give you a lot.

There is another important point; when the husband or wife, either of them, come to the ashram, the other party should not be alarmed, because everyone's emotional and spiritual needs cannot be the same. It is good if the husband, wife and children, all practise yoga, but if only the wife practises and the husband does not,



Inauguration of Satyanandashram–Panorama, Thessaloniki, 2 October 1982



it is not a serious thing. Therefore, everybody who comes to the ashram should get maximum benefit, and if this ashram goes on well I will come to Greece again. I wish success to the ashram. I also wish that you participate in the ashram, and sometime when you come to India you can see the parent ashram.

In Europe we have an ashram in every country. First of all I established the ashram in Paris, now they are all over France. Then I established more ashrams in the Scandinavian countries, Copenhagen and Switzerland. Then came ashrams in Ireland, England, Spain, Italy and Germany. We established ashrams in Athens and Kalamata some years ago. Last year we established an ashram in Thessaloniki, not this one but another one, and I hope the interest will be so great that we will be able to run both ashrams at the same time. If more and more people come to practise yoga, we should have classes in the old and new ashrams because Thessaloniki is a very big city and two ashrams are not enough. There should be many ashrams and many teachers.

Spiritual strength

Yoga is a modern science and if you can inspire people to live the yogic life, you will be doing a great service not only to your society but also to your nation. Nations and cultures survive on spiritual power. Military power, prosperity and affluence are not permanent. Poor nations become richer and rich nations become poorer, but if the people of a country are spiritual and have a sound philosophy, they survive.

Happiness in the family, happiness between husband and wife and children comes only if there is discipline. When the family members, especially the elder members, lack discipline, there is restlessness and conflict in the

family. What is the use of having a family if they keep on crying every morning and evening? The purpose of having a family is to share each other's joy. You share all kinds of joys with children, husband, wife, parents, and the happiness that you give to each other should be natural happiness. When you say, "My darling", it should be both natural and real.

A child's wisdom

Universities do not teach you personality; they do not teach you humanity; they teach you something with which you can earn your daily bread, with which you can survive in this complicated society. They do not teach you how to



be happy. They do not teach you how to understand your marriage partner, children and friends. Therefore, how can you expect these things from the children? If you give them an example then you can expect it, but otherwise please keep quiet! We are undisciplined. We expect discipline from our children. Think for a while. Is it possible?

Children imbibe. You practise yoga, they will imbibe it. You respect each other, they will imbibe that. You practise discipline, they will accept it. You quarrel with each other morning and evening, and they will imbibe that. If you just remain absent from your house up to twelve o'clock, one or two o'clock, they will imbibe it. A child in the womb, a child in the cradle, a child which is grown up, all understand in equal measure. This child who is eight now, understood you more when he was in the cradle because he was registering your behaviour through his mental camera. Actually, he did not understand it, he registered it and now he will develop and print it and understand it and kick you. Once you bring the atmosphere of yoga into your family you will find that your children are becoming mellow, more tender and more amiable.

We need and want disciplined swamis, we do not want careless swamis who just want to go out to the nightclubs. We want responsible swamis who have enough social consciousness and who spend their time in studying, teaching and practising; who do not talk all kinds of rubbish and do not try to practise samadhi by taking drugs, and who do not want to practise tantra by means of sexual interaction. They should live like guardians of your children. If you are like that you can come to me. I do not want you to become a rogue. If you can live alone and if you do not have passionate desires and if you have compassion for society, love for yoga, and a feeling for me, you should be ready.

—Talk at Panorama, Thessaloniki, 2 October 1982

Integral Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

This is a very important meeting for everybody because I am making a departure from metaphysics and trying to jump into the realm of experience directly. Your great philosopher, Socrates, said, "Know thyself", and I know, and history knows that he was not really understood.

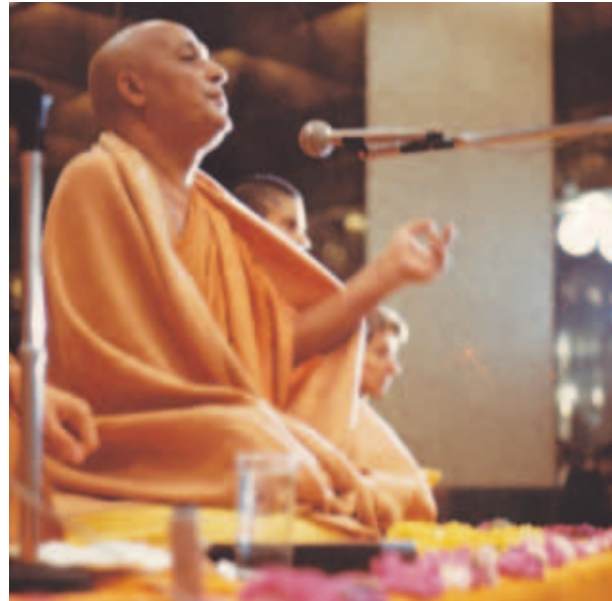
The need for personal experience

Years rolled by. Greek people wanted to know themselves, but in the process of knowledge of their own Self they developed Epicureanism and Hedonism. These two schools of philosophy developed as miscalculations of the knowledge because Socrates did not tell them about the knowledge of the Self. Philosophers who succeeded him explained what the Self was. A system of metaphysical explanations followed for hundreds of years in your country, but theoretical knowledge will not give you an experience. Your teacher will tell you the truth, your philosophers will write volume after volume on truth, but you can experience according to the quality of your own mind and nothing beyond that. You may say anything to a blind man about the sun, but he can only see the sun according to his blindness. You may sing beautiful songs and hymns before a deaf man, but he can only hear what he is capable of. Knowledge and experience must go hand in hand. I can talk about the Self for hours. You can write volumes about Socrates' statement, but if you are not able to transform the quality of your mind, you are going to become an Epicurean or a Hedonist. This, precisely, is the shortcoming of western philosophy. It has

epistemology, beautiful, but when I ask the teacher how to experience it, he cannot reply. It is in this particular realm that yoga has conquered the hearts of millions throughout the world for centuries. It is the contribution of India to the rest of the world.

Transforming the mind

How to transform the mind? How to improve the quality of experience? How to transform the awareness of matter? How to bypass the turbulence of the mind? It is very easy to talk about transcendental matters; it is easy to talk about God and the Self, about astral beings, etc. It is so easy to describe paradise, but where are the eyes to see that? Where is the mind to experience that? Thinking or contemplation cannot bring you to that point of experience; reflection also cannot bring you to that



Swami Satyananda Holiday Inn, Athens, Saturday
2 October 1982

point of experience because reflection, contemplation and thinking, are the manifestations of the mind.

Mind is a limited instrument, handled by man, therefore the hypothesis is: let me first develop the instrument of perception. If one has to see the sun, one must have eyes. If you want to have the perception of the object, you must first remove the cataract in your eyes. Beyond the mind is the supermind, and the supermind is not at all different from the mind. When your mind becomes free from turbulence, when your mind becomes free from distractions, when your mind transcends the idea of duality and conflicts, and loses its categories of time, space and object, then it is supermind.

Just as you clean the mirror so you can see your face, in the same way you should make your consciousness free from all sorts of thoughts and conflicts. But you should not misunderstand me and think that I am trying to stop your mind. I do not mean that you should shut your mind or withdraw the mind. When you close your eyes you do not close your mind. When you close the senses you do not close the mind; if you do, that is hypnosis. When you close your mind, your senses and intelligence, that is hypnosis, but when you close your outer eyes and open your inner eyes, that is called yoga.

Inner vision

What is that inner eye? You do not have to imagine the inner eye at the eyebrow centre. You do not even see the inner eye. When you see an object inside after closing the outer eye, that is the inner eye. You see me here with your open eyes. You see me with outer eyes, but if you close your eyes and you can still see me, that is called the inner eye. Therefore, in order to open the mind within, it is necessary that you have an object to perceive.

Of course, yoga is a vast subject and I cannot possibly talk about the whole of yoga this evening, but when I

condense the subject of yoga I come to a specific point. Yoga has three basic points. If you want to open your mind then yoga suggests three points to you: the first is sound, the second is known as the diagram, the third is called mandala. In the language of yoga and tantra they are known as mantra, yantra and mandala. It is very important for everybody to pay absolute attention to this topic. Mantra is sound, yantra is diagram and mandala can be two- or three-dimensional. These are the bases upon which you can develop your outer mind and transform it to supermind.

Mantra

The first base is called mantra. Mantra does not mean a holy name or a divine name; it does not even mean the name of gods and goddesses. It is a sound which can be experienced at different frequencies. The sound which I am producing has a low frequency. If I lowered the frequency even more you would not be able to hear it, and if I raised the frequency of the sound, then also you would not be able to hear it.

The mind first of all accepts a sound, then it repeats the sound. As you repeat the sound it gains a higher frequency. At one stage the sound attains the highest possible frequency. At that time there is an explosion within the mind and then the mind comes out. What you know about the mind is not the mind; it is just the patterns of the mind. Anger, ambition, passion, worry, they are not the mind. The real mind is the hidden substance within each and everybody.

This is the first principle called mantra yoga. Then you have to experience the manifestations of the mind. As you go on practising the mantra, you go on expressing the totality of the mind. First comes the process of purging. The schizophrenic character of the mind expresses itself first, and in the beginning it is not a very

happy experience. Many times we make a mistake in the beginning when we try to meditate. When thoughts surge in the mind we suppress them because we have been taught the classification of good and bad. Whether it is a good experience or a bad experience, whether it is a good thought or a bad thought, it has to go out. When you are seated in the lotus posture and practising mantra, the subconscious mind, the deeper mind, purges itself. The purpose of mantra, the purpose of sound, is not to create concentration, but to clear the path for concentration.

Those of you who are sincere seekers should understand the difference between clearing the way and creating concentration. They are not one and the same thing. If you do not resolve the conflicts in your mind properly then they manifest at a higher stage in meditation. They are known as astral experiences, which do not mean anything. These astral experiences are very bewitching. You come out of your room and say, "Oh, I had a beautiful experience", but it was nothing but a manifestation of the conflict, the schizophrenia and suppressions which would have manifested otherwise, if you were careful. Therefore, the mantra should be practised without confrontation with the mind.

There is no direct entry into meditation. Meditation is the culmination of your total efforts. When the mind becomes composed, meditation begins. Tranquillity is not the result of meditation; knowledge is the result of meditation. Tranquillity, relaxation, is the result of withdrawal.

Yantra

The second base is called yantra. Yantras are diagrams and they were known to different cultures. Indians, Egyptians, Kabbalists, Babylonians and the pre-Hellenic cultures all knew about yantra. Yantras are mystic substances. There are not just a few, there are many, and they work upon

the archetypes of the brain. These archetypes are the totality of man's experience, life after life. Each archetype is an experience of an act. What you experience when you dream is an experience of archetypes. When you understand me as a man, or I understand you as a man, that is a result of an archetype. All knowledge, every experience, is present in you in the archetypal form.

If you look at a flower and appreciate it, you withdraw the flower within you. That flower is registered by your inner system, but it is not registered in the form of a flower, it is turned into something called the archetype. In yoga we call it samskara or karma. This archetype comes out during the experiences in meditation. The archetypes are sometimes very powerful. They contain the knowledge of lifetimes. They contain the seeds of clairvoyance, telepathy and extra-sensory perception. They express themselves in the form of art, painting, music and intuitive ideas. Whatever knowledge man has gained, whatever knowledge man has given, is an expression of archetypes. If you know how to explode the right type of archetype then you can completely change the quality of your mind. Maybe through this you can become a genius. Therefore, in tantric and yogic practices we take recourse to the use of yantra.

Mandala

The third aspect is called mandala. It is a controversial matter. For thousands of years it has received kicks and blows from the religious philosophers. God is formless. We accept it. God is nameless. We accept it. But you need a form to improve your limited mind. Our mind is so infirm, our mind is invalid, it cannot float through ideas; you close your eyes and say, "I am immortal." What do you see? Abstractness, nothing but abstractness. If your mind is infinite, all right, but your mind is not infinite. Your mind is

finite. It cannot understand anything which is beyond the finiteness, it needs a form to see, it needs a sound to hear. There are special people who do not need a yantra. You must first of all be sure that you are that special person. If you are a special person you do not need these three, but how will you know whether you are special or not?

I will give you one exercise. You go back tonight and try to develop the experience of pain which you had a few years ago, exactly in the same way. Can you manifest the pain? Can you manifest the suffering? Could you cry at that time? If you can, you are a special person, I bow my head to you, and tomorrow please do not come to my meetings; I have not come here for special people.

Now, remember the pain. You can remember the date, you can remember the time, the circumstances, the type of accident. You can remember the pain but nothing beyond that. At most, you can say, "Oh it was a terrible pain!" If this is the case, then you are not a special person. Come tomorrow and I will tell you more. It is such people who need a mandala.

Never say that God has no form. We accept that He has no form but you must say, "My mind has no form and therefore it needs a form." You may need the form of a guru. You may need the form of a saint or a prophet; you may need the form of the moon, a star, a fire flame or candle flame, a trident, Shivalingam, or serpent. I have just cited a few mandalas.

There are thousands of mandalas. You can draw them from human beings, you can draw them from any realm of nature, but a mandala has two or three dimensions.

A picture, a painting or a photograph has two dimensions. I have three dimensions and the mind catches an object with three dimensions. If you do not like three dimensions then you can have two. Of course there is something which has no dimensions; there is something

which has neither one nor two nor three dimensions, it has no dimensions, and that is called the fourth dimension.

Know thyself

Regarding that which is the fourth dimension, Socrates said, "Know thyself." One thousand five hundred years earlier, Buddha said the same thing. Three thousand years before the advent of Socrates, the Upanishads said the same thing. The central teaching of the Upanishads is "Know thyself." In Sanskrit they say, "Atmanan viddhi." The rishis, the saints and the seers asked, "Who am I?"

Two men were talking. One said, "I am a strong man with whiskers, moustache and beard." The other said, "Hey, are you only that much? Are you not the mind?" The first said, "No, mind is the brain, that's all." These people were known as demons. Those who consider the body to be the first, to be the last, they are demons. Then the second person said, "Who am I?" and went on meditating. Finally he came to the point, "I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not the senses, I am not these ideas, I am not this karma, I am not this experience. I am something beyond this. Then who am I?"

Then he went to the guru and said, "Guruji, I am not the body." The guru said, "My child, you are all right." He said, "I am not the mind." The guru said, "My child, you are all right." He said, "I am not the senses." The guru said, "You are all right." Then he said, "Guruji, who am I?" The guru said, "Can you find yourself from these finite manifestations? These are all acrobatic feats you have been doing. When you say, 'I am not the body,' you are aware of the body. When you say, 'I am not the mind,' you are aware of the mind. When you say, 'I am not the senses,' you are living in the senses. Transcend reasoning, transcend logic and transcend intellect."

What to do? "Close your eyes, close your mouth and close your ears." That is what a Sufi said. What does this

reality mean? You want to know who you are? You will have to start right from the beginning, and where does yoga begin? Yoga does not begin with dhyana, meditation; yoga does not begin with the opening of the mind. Then where does it begin? Yoga stops with meditation; meditation is the epilogue of yoga, the conclusion of yoga, the essence of yoga.

Channelling energy

Yoga begins with karma yoga, dynamic association with the situations, events and cruelties of life. Karma yoga transforms the philosophy of your life, of your relationship with man and matter so you face life squarely and absorb its influences quietly. It is hard to tell you now. If you want to study I can tell you only one book that the world has given. You may agree or not, but there is only one book that teaches you to transform life into superlife; the name of that book is Bhagavad Gita. In short, it is known as the Gita. Live like a man, suffer like a man, face ordinary life like a man. You must have faith in God and you must have a definite philosophy of life which allows you to go further and further without renouncing life. There yoga begins.

The second chapter in yoga is, "Balance your emotions." You cannot love man completely, I can assure you. If you have millions of gallons of water and a small ditch to fill, what will happen? The ditch will become full and the water will overflow. That is what is happening to everybody, that is what is happening to all of us. Everybody has so much love, we give it to our wives, our children, our fathers and mothers and friends, but still we have surplus love. What can we do with the surplus love?

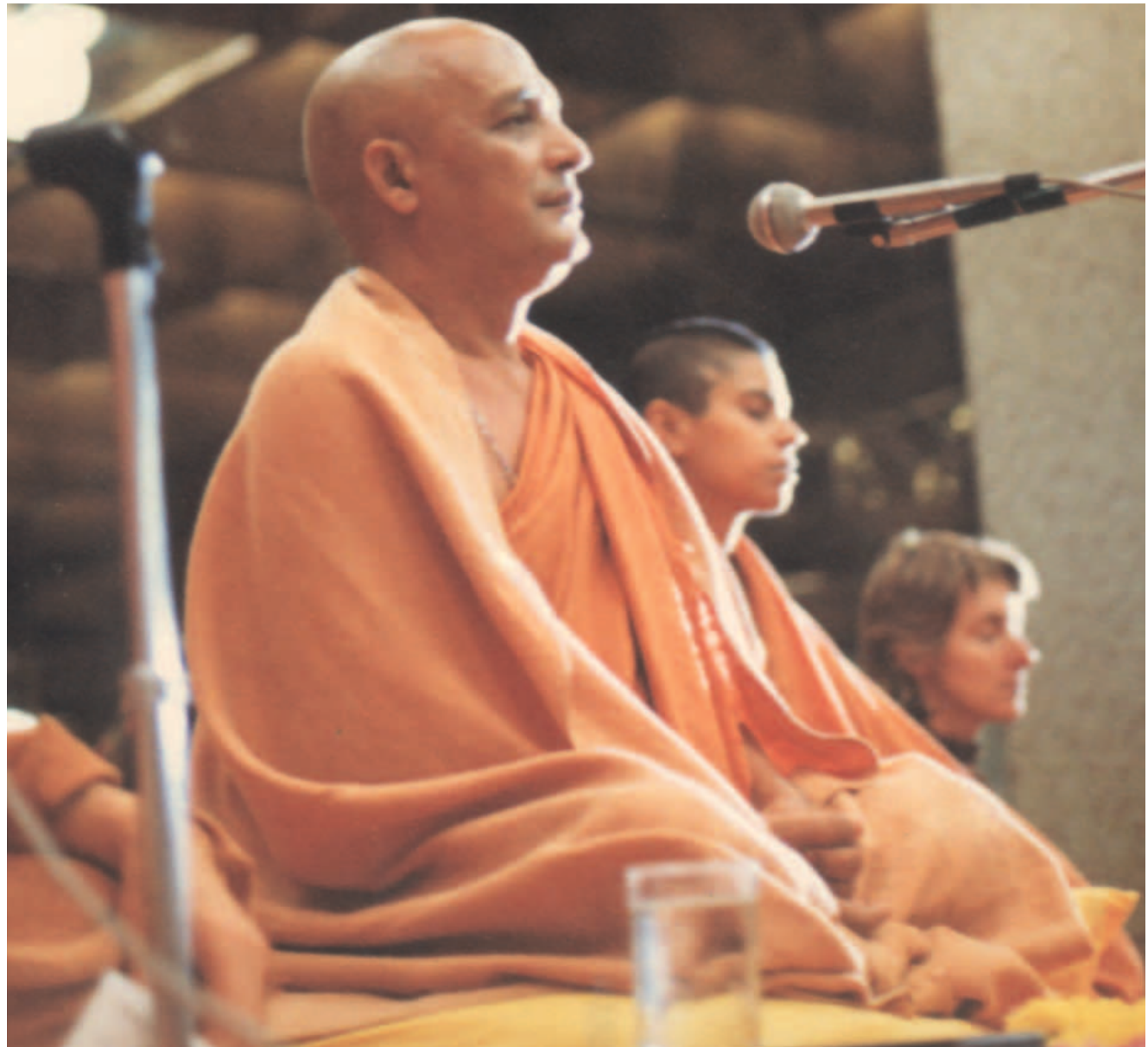
Nature taxes you. You get frustrated because nobody can understand your love completely. Therefore you must try to find an object to love in whom you can completely place all your love. God is the right place, but how to love God? We go to a sanctum sanctorum and say, "God I love

you, I love you, I love you.” That is all acting, that is all emotion, intellectualized sentiment. If you truly love God, you are liberated. One moment of sincere love is enough. You do not have to shout for twenty years, “I love you. I love you. I love you.” It means you have been shouting in the darkness. We have not seen God. We have seen saints, we have seen gurus and masters. First give your devotion to them and you will have peace of mind. Sing kirtan in ecstasy for fifteen minutes, thirty minutes, forty minutes, forget yourself. Get out of the mind, do not try to fight with the mind. With symphony, with music, with tunes, get out of the mind and fill yourself with ecstasy. That is called bhakti yoga.

Hatha yoga, raja yoga and jnana yoga remain. The time is over and I know that I am not satisfied and I have to send you back thirsty. At the end, let me tell you just a few things. I have not come here to give you a philosophy. I have no cult. I have just one thing in my mind. I must tell everybody to have an experience. One ounce of experience is much better than tons and tons of theory. You are fortunate if you can just forget yourselves for a moment. You are fortunate if you can turn your gaze within. The mind which can see the external world should be able to see the internal beauty.

There are beautiful philosophies in the world. I like them. There are great religions in the world, I bow my head to them; but yoga is a system which tells you how to get the experience. It is not a system of narcotics, nor is it a system of psycho-narcotics. It is a combination of dynamism, emotional balance, rationality and deep inner awareness.

—Discourse at Hotel Holiday Inn, Athens,
2 October 1982

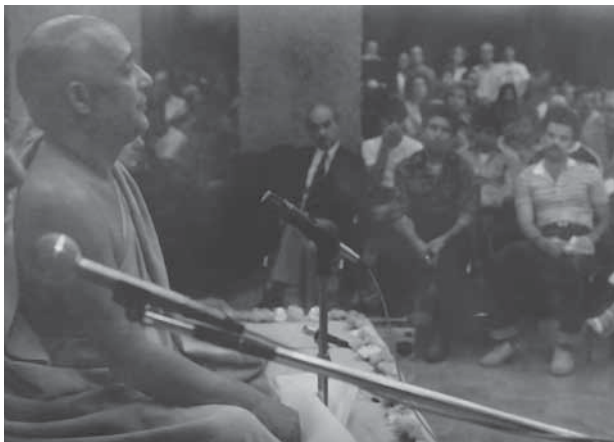


Swami Satyananda, Holiday Inn Athens, 2 October 1982

Introduction to Integral Yoga Seminar

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

I am very happy to be here at the inauguration of this important seminar. These two-day seminars work as an inspiration to many people who want to start the practices of yoga. We do not claim to give you a complete practice, of course, but we try to give you a glimpse of exactly what you will be doing in yoga. In yoga the first thing is a seminar and the next thing is a training course. After the training course you can carry on with your practices individually. Then you can choose for yourself one particular way which you want to follow throughout your life. In the beginning you should practise quite a few



Swami Satyananda at Holiday Inn, Athens, 3 October 1982

types of yoga in order to improve the body and the mind, but later you can choose one type of yoga for your daily practice and perfect it.

In this seminar I have chosen quite a few practices for you. First are the yoga postures, second is the breathing, third is yoga nidra, fourth ajapa japa. These four practices are very important for you in your day-to-day life. Yoga postures are known to practically everybody and you know what they do for your health. The practices of pranayama are also very important and most people know what they do to the mind and body, but yoga nidra is very important and not many people know about it.

It is such an important technique that these days, throughout the world, people are eager to learn and practise it along with another practice which is known as ajapa japa. I intend to teach you both of these in order to initiate you into techniques of meditation, and also to make you understand how you should concentrate on the breath and your psychic centres, how you should deal with your mind during the moment of concentration, and what you should expect when you are trying to concentrate your mind.

I know most people want to meditate, but closing the eyes is not the way to meditation. There are certain techniques which act as aids to meditation. These techniques are more important than the concentration itself. For example, if you sit down with the eyes closed and watch the movements of the body this will help you a lot. It is not important that you should not move your body, you can move any part of the body, but you should know that you are moving.

In the same way, you know that you breathe throughout your life but you have never thought about this. Breath is a very important way to concentrate the mind. If you concentrate on the even and natural flow of the breath, you will find that you are able to concentrate better. You have many important psychic centres in the

body. One psychic centre is in the middle of the forehead, others are situated in the framework of the spine. If you concentrate on each of the psychic centres for about a second or two and do this a number of times, you will automatically be able to get into meditation.

Individual development

It is difficult to say which particular centre in you is responding. Everybody has one or the other centre developed. Some can and will feel fine with the eyebrow centre and some will get better results from the cardiac centre. In order to find out which of the centres in you is more developed you will have to try all the centres for some time. If you can discover your centre then concentration becomes a very easy matter.

Whatever is said, the most difficult thing is how to be able to sit for at least half an hour. Some people have a very weak spine and if they try and sit upright for some time, they just drop or there is pain in the spine. Some people have difficulties with their knees; others have difficulties with their ankles. After five minutes some get pain and cramps in the body. Therefore, for those people who want to have better concentration, the discipline and training of the body is essential. The physical body is the basis for good concentration.

So, this seminar will be a sort of glimpse for all of you. I believe you will be able to decide for yourself whether you should have further training in yoga. The last thing I want to tell you is that what little you learn in this seminar will go a long way in your life. There will be certain difficulties felt by you, and you may not be able to understand many things. With some of the yoga postures the younger people will be able to take a chance while older people should not attempt them, but in yoga nidra and the concentration practice there is no such limit or restriction.

—Talk at Hotel Holiday Inn, Athens, 3 October 1982

ERT Television Interview

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. What is yoga?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga is a perfect practical system for the health of the body, mind and personality. The science of yoga is composed of external postures and internal practices of concentration. The practices of yoga can take care of the human body, its difficulties and deficiencies. At the same time, yoga removes the deep-rooted conflicts from the depths of the human mind. So, in short, yoga is a science for the development of the total personality.

Q. What are the benefits that yoga gives to man? When did it start in Greece and how much response is there in Greece?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga is beneficial for the individual but at the same time it is also beneficial for the whole of humanity because it is a science which has brought natures, cultures and boundaries together, and has brought time and space under one canopy.

Yoga came to Greece in 1977 with one of my disciples who was residing here. Since then, a lot of work has taken place in this country, in Athens, in Thessaloniki and everywhere. Yoga is flourishing at a great speed in this country because Greek people seem to be very yoga-minded and they can understand how yoga relates to their mind, to their daily life, to their diseases, to their conflicts and their peace of mind.

Q. Would it be possible to hear a mantra sound?

Paramahamsaji: Om is a sound, Ram is a sound, Klim is a sound, Shreem, Aim, Bam. There are so many sounds of different frequencies. You have to repeat the same sound again and again, always the same. The frequency of sound changes according to the level of the mind. As the mind goes deeper the frequency goes higher or lower. You start pronouncing it at one frequency, but if you are pronouncing the sound and then your mind changes, the frequency also changes.

Q. What is the meaning and importance of mantra? Could you explain what mantra means?

Paramahamsaji: Mantra is a sound which makes the mind free from its obsessions. Just as you clean your dirty dresses with soap, in the same way sound can clean the mind of its impressions. Mantra is a very ancient word in Sanskrit. It is composed of two roots: one root means 'repetition' and the other means 'freedom'. Therefore, the literal meaning of mantra is: "By repetition of which the mind becomes free." What we call the mind is not the pure mind. Our mind is coloured. Say, you have a white bed sheet. If you use it for a long time some other colour is added to it. In the same way, the mind is mixed with impressions. We accumulate these impressions throughout our lives.

First of all, these impressions should be cleaned. In order to clean these impressions, a sound has to be used because they are embedded very deep. It is not at all easy to expel these impressions. For example, if you are constipated for many days, what do you do? You take a laxative. Now, before taking the laxative you have a very bad feeling in your stomach, then your tongue is coated, you pass foul winds and get cramps every now

and again, therefore you must remove the constipation. What happens when you take the laxative? You go to the toilet a number of times. The same thing happens to the mind. When these impressions are embedded in the mind, the mind becomes negative, it has pain, it has fears, it has many negative elements. We do not know why that is happening. You think that your wife is bad so you go on quarrelling, or your business is not going well and so you are unhappy, or your son or your daughter are not good and so you are worried, but that is not the cause. The world is not the cause of your unhappiness. Worries, anxiety, fears, passions, they are the boundaries of your mind, so you try psychoanalysis or you try to escape from the realities by going to the pictures, to clubs, this and that. It doesn't really help you. So, just as you take a laxative to clear the body, you can take a laxative to clear the mind also. Mantra is the laxative for your mind.

When you take a mantra from your guru, you should not expect concentration. If you are practising concentration with your mantra you are suppressing, mental constipation. When you practise mantra, more and more depressions come out. Worries must come out, anxiety must come out, passions, fears and suicidal tendencies must come out; all that is foul must come out. That is the purpose of mantra, therefore mantra is a sound which, when repeated again and again, allows your mind to expel its impressions.

Many times we people make a mistake. We take a mantra from a guru and when we have practised it a number of times we get many thoughts rather than concentration and we think the mantra is powerless. Many times people come to me and ask for a mantra. I ask them, "Do you practise any mantra?" They say, "Yes, but I do not want mantra from that guru, it doesn't work." I ask, "How does it not work?" They say, "When I practise

that mantra I get more disturbed.” I say, “Exactly, that is mantra’s mission.”

When you take a laxative it must disturb your stomach; when you take a mantra it must disturb your mind; the subconscious mind must come out. You know we are human beings, social human beings; we belong to a society, a religion and a culture, we cannot behave completely freely. We have to have certain disciplines: national discipline, social discipline, religious discipline, family discipline. In order to discipline ourselves, we have to suppress ourselves. If we do not suppress ourselves there will be chaos in society. If we do suppress ourselves we accumulate impressions which create problems within our personality.

You must understand this very well; we are all suppressed souls. I have to suppress myself. I have to suppress myself before all of you. Many times I want to tell you things frankly, but I cannot. I would like to say that you are wrong but I do not say it because if I do you will be disturbed and our relationship will be disturbed. In the same way, you have to take care of your parents and your family, you have to take care of the police and the law. They are essential disciplines for family and society. Therefore, throughout your life, from your childhood, you are accumulating unexpressed symptoms. Sometimes it is too much so you fall ill, sometimes it is very little but that also affects your personality.

The way is timely clearance through mantra. Every morning you must practise the mantra, let the depressions come out. Every night practise the mantra, let the depressions come out. It is like cleaning your apartment every morning and every night. Just as you clean your kitchen, your house, do you clean your mind?

How do you clean the mind? That is very difficult. Just by trying to be ethical you cannot clean the mind, nor by just trying to act morally. On the other hand it can cause

depressions. In yoga the most powerful method is called mantra, but still people do not practise it methodically. When they practise mantra they become tense and practise concentration. You must take the mala in your hand and practise, Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya mentally, and let the mind manifest disturbances. Whenever thoughts come, let them come, do not control them, but you must see what they are. With one mind you must do mantra, with the other mind you must see what you are thinking. This will happen for a long time, it can be one year, two years or twenty years, everything depends on how careful you are. If you are careful with your thinking, later on the time will be shorter. If you repeat the same mistakes, psychological and emotional mistakes, it will take many years.

Now, on the one hand you are cleaning your stomach, on the other hand you are taking your food carefully. It is not good to clean your stomach and then take all kinds of rubbish immediately. Then you have to take a laxative every day and go to the toilet twenty times daily. You must take a laxative and go to the toilet to clear the stomach and then take care that the same mistake does not happen again, you must eat carefully. In the same way, with mantra, when the explosion is going on, you must be careful with your thinking process. During that time you must read books of positive knowledge, you must meet and associate with people of positive nature and from time to time you must take to fasting. From time to time you must analyze all the negative tendencies of the mind, and then what will happen? Suddenly the mind will switch off, without your effort it will switch off. It will just stop and then the inner awareness will dawn in you. You do not have to pull the mind; the mind will do the whole thing by itself.

Now, this is the general definition of mantra, the spiritual purpose of mantra, but mantra has many objectives.

Mantra is a very powerful substance. It can expand your mind. It can stretch the mind. The mind can radiate like light. There are mantras practised in order to create effects in the objective fields. You know about black magic, you Greek people should know it. There are what are called charms, mantras used to create certain effects. It is not just psychological, it is actual. There are some people who have the capacity to do it. These people are born psychic, what do you call them? Witches, sorcerers, right? These people can use a mantra for creating an effect.

So, mantra is not only for accomplishing spiritual life, it is also for creating effects in the objective field. Mantra should not be misinterpreted as a divine name; it is just a sound or a combination of sounds. These sounds were discovered by seers in deep states of meditation thousands of years ago. Each sound has certain frequencies, each sound has a colour, a specific gravity and each sound has a distinct effect. These sounds are of two types: one is called the mantra and the other is called the beeja. Beeja means ‘seed’. Beeja is potential sound, like having a seed.

You must definitely believe and understand that sound can attain higher frequency. It can be given higher frequency because sound is not just voice; sound is a form of energy, and this energy operates on lower, middle and higher frequency. When you produce a sound it has a low frequency. My sound has a low frequency and your hearing capacity works at a low frequency, therefore you are able to listen. However, if there is a mosquito here it cannot hear anything because the frequencies are not suitable. There have to be suitable frequencies for speaking and hearing.

When you think a sound in your mind, it attains a high frequency and when you feel a sound in your mind it has very high frequency. If you imagine a sound that somebody is producing and that you can hear inside you,

it attains the highest frequency and the sound can attain such a high frequency that it can become an objective force. The science of mantra is infinite and in India it is a special practice by itself: Hindus consider mantra greater than God. It is a very important aid in spiritual life.

Q. Are the archetypes the memory of the cells of the body or another type of memory?

Paramahamsaji: Archetypes are impressions which we register in one or more lives and these archetypes are very subtle in nature. I will just give you an example so you can understand. At the age of two, a baby is sleeping in the cradle, then her eyes open. Suddenly some murderers open the door and come into the house. Her mother is sitting by the side of the cradle. These bandits, these dacoits pull the ornaments from her mother's neck, arms, hands. She does not resist, but she is frightened. In the meantime her husband comes in, the moment he enters the door these dacoits fire at him and he dies, and they run away with the ornaments.

The baby understands nothing, but she is registering everything, just like a hidden camera is registering everything. She grows to the age of ten, twelve, fifteen, twenty-five, and does not remember this incident at all and her mother also does not tell her anything about it. Then once, in a dream, she sees the experience re-enacted. Out of fear she wakes up and her mother asks her, "What is happening to you?" She relates her dream and her mother tells her, "Yes, it happened when you were two years old." This dream was an expression of the archetypes.

When we experience anything in our lives, it is registered by the subtle body, but not in the same form as it happens; the whole experience is reduced to a symbol. There is no cradle, there is no mother, there are no men, there is no revolver, there is no death, all these pictures

are not there, there is just the symbol, and these symbols are mostly pictorial. At some time, due to something or the other, these symbols re-emerge on the conscious plane. Then the whole script is re-enacted.

We are sitting here. I am talking to you about yoga. It is definitely an event which your eyes can see, your ears can hear and your mind can understand, so it is being registered. You can re-enact it after one or two or five years. You can also re-enact it after your death in this life, that is, in your next life, but the form in which this whole incident is being registered and recorded within you is not in this gross way.

These symbols are known as archetypes and there are millions and trillions of these signs. They are also known as karma and in the doctrine of karma they are known as samskara. When a gross experience is reduced to a sign it is called a samskara. Have you seen an avocado or mango tree? You must have. Have you seen the seed also? When you see the seed, can you see the mango tree there? It is there, in archetypal form.

I will try to explain to you what the science of archetype is. You can cut up each and every part of the mango seed, you will never find the mango there. You can use every kind of microscope but you will never see the mango there. Nevertheless, it is a mango tree; it will never grow into an avocado tree. A mango seed is a symbolic mango tree. Your gross life is reduced to subtle samskara and many times these samskaras come out. They come out through one sign or another. Where these archetypes remain is very difficult for me to explain. It is not in your mind, it is in your consciousness. However, at the time of expression they come out through signs.

Q. How can it be explained that when you have a negative reaction towards a person, they have a similar reaction?

Paramahamsaji: Hindus have a wonderful tradition about which you should know. When marriage takes place it never takes place between people of the same zodiac sign. If you are a Taurus and your wife is a Taurus, you are going to have the same problems. You have to be of different natures, not the same nature. Many times when you come across or live with people of the same nature you have problems with them, and this incompatibility between two persons is due to emotional monotony.

Temperamental differences are necessary to decrease the monotony and thereby increase the attraction for each other. You often have such problems in the western countries because here there is a tendency of trying to have friends of the same nature, husband and wife of the same temperament, this man and that man of the same religion, and not different. This is the tendency in your country. If the husband practises yoga and the wife wants some other life, she does not accept it. He thinks, "My wife must also practise yoga" and she thinks, "He should also come along with me."

These negative tendencies between two individuals of identical nature are natural. Just as in your garden you have many types of fruit trees and many types of flowering plants, in the same way a family can have one who is a Christian, another a Muslim and another who is a yogi. One goes to the pictures, another to nightclubs and one to the yoga ashram, perfect. You should not try to convert the other party to your philosophy and to the kind of life that you lead. That is wrong.

Q. What is the difference between yoga exercises and other kinds of exercises?

Paramahamsaji: First of all you must know that the phrase 'yoga exercise' is not correct. Traditionally, they are known as yoga postures and there is a fundamental difference



Satsang at the home of devotees Mr. Vasollios and Mrs. Lillian Papathanassopoulou on mantra diksha

between yoga postures and other exercises, which scientists have been assessing. I do not mean to criticize exercises, they are very necessary for the development of the body and muscles, but there are many differences.

The first difference is that in yoga postures the consumption of oxygen is minimal and in physical exercises it is maximum. Secondly, in yoga postures the respiration falls and during exercises it goes very high. Thirdly, in yoga postures the body temperature falls, in exercises the inner body temperature goes very high. Fourth, in yoga postures the metabolic rate slows down and in exercises it becomes very fast. Fifth, yoga postures arrest catabolism while exercises create catabolism. Sixth, in exercises the muscles receive most nutrition at the expense of the other organs; in yoga muscles receive minimum oxygen, other organs receive more. Seventh, in yoga the heart receives a gradual increase of pressure, whereas in exercises pressure rises quickly and the pressure is also released very fast. Eighth, practitioners of yoga need minimum food while people doing physical exercises need maximum food to survive.

Now, these are some of the differences, but there are certain special things in yoga postures. One special thing is the hormonal activity seen during yoga postures which you do not see in exercises at all. Another special thing is the extra electrical impulses generated by the autonomic nervous system.

These are all the differences and special traits, but there is one thing which no exercise can provide at all, only yoga can give it: awareness of inner life. If people have to be made to turn in towards themselves, then yoga stands highest.

*—Interview with Mr Economou, Athens,
3 October 1982*

Meeting with Doctors

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Science has been studying yoga for some time. Earlier, yoga was understood as a philosophy and some sort of metaphysics was attributed to it, but when the travellers from the western countries came to India they studied the science of yoga and then, when they came back to the West, they investigated it. Now, as I am talking to you this evening, the picture of yoga is more or less complete, but surely it will take some more time to formulate the theory of yoga for the purpose of scientific utility.

It took medical science centuries to establish itself. So you can understand why it is taking some time for yoga to be formulated, though scientists in the East and the West are now engaged in in-depth research on the effects of various yogic sciences.

International research

At present, an eminent doctor in Melbourne is doing a lot of work on cancer therapy through yoga. His name is Dr Ainslie Meares; he has been a surgeon, a physician, and a neurologist for over forty-five years, serving in the medical departments in Australia. What he has been working on is pranayama, meditation, and deep relaxation. In Hobart University they have investigated the effects of yoga meditation on various processes of the body. In fact, volumes and volumes of research have been recorded in the last ten years as to what happens to various functions in the body when one is meditating. Not only the psychic effects of meditation have been

investigated, but the transition that takes place in the realm of the physical body during the higher practices. In the early '30s and '40s, Dr Jung, an eminent westerner, wrote books and papers on the effects of kundalini yoga. How postures, or yoga in general, influence the brain, consciousness and other factors in the body, has been amply studied. Dr Aleksandrowicz, Dr Rombowski and Dr Tadeusz Pasek were pioneers of yogic research, with their first startling research in Poland in 1962. Dr Benson started his research in America four decades ago, but the earliest researches were done by Dr Willis, also in America. He felt that the yoga exercises were not only physical exercises, so much so that other scientists were to carry out research into what happens to various processes in the body during yogic practices. Sometime in 1972, I read a very detailed report in the magazine *Soviet Land* on the training astronauts received in the practice of pranayama. The magazine indicated that the purpose of this training was to increase the body's vitality, strengthen the nervous system, coronary behaviour and the brain. In Czechoslovakia many doctors are working through their medical council on yogic research. Last year I had a seminar in the medical college in Paris with eminent doctors in the discussion panel. This is just a glimpse into what is happening in the field of yogic research.

This year I visited Japan and met with one great scientist, Dr Hiroshi Motoyama, an eminent medical doctor in Tokyo. I have followed his research for many years. In his early work he involved himself in the phenomena of acupuncture and while he was researching this he came across yogic science. One yogi from India was visiting him. Until then Dr Motoyama did not know much about yoga, but this yogi told him about pranayama, the breathing technique which is a combination of inspiration, retention, expiration, and controlling and contracting certain centres

in the body. Dr Motoyama wanted to investigate, so this yogi was subjected to scientific experimentation.

This was a great experience for Dr Motoyama. For years he had been trying to control the energy blocks in the body through the science of acupuncture, but when he began observing the effects of pranayama on the energy flows, he was startled to find that energy flows are cleared during the process of pranayama. When I met him last year in his lab he told me all about his experiments and he has come to the conclusion that by the practice of pranayama you can increase the frequency of energy in the body.

In India at present there are many researches going on, aided and recommended by the Central Government, in the field of yoga therapy. The Indian Medical Association has concluded that yoga gives a definite cure for diabetes mellitus, as a result of consistent and repeated research being conducted under the supervision of the Health Ministry of India.

In 1968, the Central Government of India gave me a grant for a research project which was conducted with the help of doctors in a medical college hospital in India. The subject for the research was the effects of yoga postures

on coronary diseases. Eminent cardiologists were leading the research and I was coordinating it. There were twenty doctors on the panel, not only from cardiology but from different faculties. For five years, more than one thousand coronary patients were referred to the faculty of yoga. The conclusion has not yet been drawn, but one thing has emerged very clearly: yoga can definitely help in the rehabilitation of heart patients. This is completely opposite to the views held by doctors earlier, when they used to advise heart patients not to do anything. This conclusion is final, but we are working more on this project and we are sure that yoga will emerge as a permanent therapy in cardiovascular diseases.

Now, let me tell you what yoga is, not the philosophy and the metaphysics, let me classify it in my own way. The faculties which have been investigated so far are: yogic posture, yogic breathing, yogic relaxation, concentration and meditation, and kundalini yoga. Out of these, most researches deal with yogic postures, yogic breathing and meditation.

Effects of yoga postures

Yoga postures are thought to be exercises in the West, but by all the conclusions of the researches, they are not exercises at all. There may be movements in the body when you do them, but you can't say that they are exercises, as it has been found that during the practice of yoga postures the consumption of oxygen in the body is minimum, which is not the case with physical exercise. It has also been noticed that during the practice of yoga postures the respiratory rate falls and consequently there is minimum pressure exerted on the coronary system, which is definitely not true of physical exercise. Therefore, these yoga practices are considered to be postures, not exercises.

The way you do them has much more to do with the nervous system and intra-organic processes than with



Meeting with doctors, scientists, psychologists, parapsychologists, alternative therapists and yoga teachers, Holiday Inn, Athens, 4 October 1982.

the muscles. During certain yoga postures hormones are secreted and circulated in the blood vessels. There are certain practices which have a special relationship with the adrenal glands. Other postures have a direct relationship with the thyroid or pancreas and there are certain yoga postures which maintain a balance between the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems. As a result of balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, many psychosomatic illnesses can be easily passed over during periods of anxiety. There is always the problem of hyperacidity and people who are suffering from ulcers, whether peptic

ulcers, gastric ulcers, or duodenal ulcers, are the people who are anxious and worried by nature. As a consequence of their nature, which is ridden by anxiety, they produce more acidity than can be assimilated by the body. The practices of yogic relaxation come to pacify this process.

You can control anxiety, not necessarily by meditation, but by bringing about a certain state in the relationship between sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. Anxiety may be a consequence of the physiological state, or a physiological symptom may be the consequence of anxiety. Therefore, a disease symptom is not merely psychosomatic, it could be somatopsychic. In

one case they can be treated through medical science, but in the other case we try to create a balance between the two systems of therapy.

The yoga postures are numerous. It is not necessary for me to tell you a lot about them. Some are inverted postures, some are forward or backward bending postures, some are dynamic and some are static postures, and there are certain postures which relate exclusively to the energy flows in the body.

In yoga the philosophy is very simple. It presupposes using two points of energy in the body. I am using the word 'energy' exactly in the sense of energy. I am not using the word with a philosophical connotation. Just as you have energy in the electrical cables, in the same way yoga postulates two kinds of energy in the physical body. They are known as consciousness and light. Consciousness is not a consequence of matter. In yoga, thought is not a consequence of the brain. Consciousness and matter are two entirely different things according to yoga. Prana is known as light. It controls all the organs, mobility, temperature, digestion, span of life, etc. While you have prana you are alive; lack of prana means death. That is one type of energy called prana. The second energy is known as consciousness. You can call it the mind also, but consciousness is better. This consciousness is responsible for awareness, knowledge, the senses, cognition and perception.

The two forces are distributed throughout the body by a network of nerve channels. The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, in scientific terminology, represent these two forces. These two systems control the different organs of the body, such as the kidneys, heart, lungs, pancreas, and there is a constant flow through each and every organ all the time. When there is a block in the process of energy, disease occurs.



Here is a simple example which everybody can understand. From the powerhouse, the electricity comes to your house. It comes to the main switch, then it is distributed to different circuits in each and every room in your apartment. If something is fused somewhere, that particular circuit does not work. It may be because it has been overworked or there may be a short circuit. Whatever the cause, that particular circuit will not work until you repair the fuse.

The conducting network

According to yoga there is a network of 72,000 channels in the body for the flow of energy. The spine is not merely an assemblage of discs, but within the framework of the spine there are six important centres. Distribution of these two forms of energy to every part of the body takes place through them. These two energies must work in harmony, in balance. That is the program of yoga, and yoga means harmony. I am not talking about social harmony. I am talking about harmony in the physical body.

When there is disharmony then there is disease, either a physical disease or a psychic disease. When pranas are at their lowest ebb you have physiological disease; when the consciousness is at its lowest ebb you have psychic disease. Physiological disease should be counteracted through yoga postures and yoga breathing, and psychic diseases must be counteracted through relaxation and meditation. However, yoga goes beyond this. Yoga therapy is going to be a science sooner or later. First it may be a preventative science, then let it be a curative science, but eventually it has got to become a promotive science.

Conscious evolution

Let me introduce myself. In India I run the biggest yoga centre in the world with a capacity for seven hundred indoor patients, dealing with respiratory diseases, digestive

disorders, psychological disorders, and patients come from all over the world. However, yoga has something more to offer to mankind. The practices of yoga help man to evolve his consciousness. Consciousness is a reality. Man was primitive. He was a barbarian, he was a cannibal; today he is not. There is evolution of consciousness in the realm of nature. Man began to sing poetry and to paint; he began to talk about compassion, love, charity and mercy. This is metamorphosis in the realm of the mind. I am not talking about physical metamorphosis. I am talking about metamorphosis in the realm of consciousness, which is related to nature. Evolution is going on naturally and spontaneously. In millions of years you will be different people. In millions of years your brain will feel differently and act differently, but that is if it is left to the laws of nature.

If you can study those laws of nature, then you can apply yoga. Then you can accelerate the evolution of this process. The scientists have been doing the same. They have studied the laws of nature. They are accelerating the process. We can study the laws of consciousness and thereby we can evolve the whole thing faster, and yoga will accomplish this.

We have to accept yoga on two grounds. First, on the medical and scientific grounds which are going to be a reality sooner or later. Second, on the grounds of the process of metamorphosis of consciousness for a brighter new world. All of you who are seated here are the thinkers of a new society. You have studied the laws of the body and its function, but do you know the laws of the mind? Do you know what life is and what it means? As scientists and as human beings you have to accept both these reasons for the propagation of yoga.

Before I conclude, I must tell you there are hundreds of publications on the scientific studies in yoga. All of you should see that you go through these manuals so

that, through your medical science, you can treat a disease, and through yoga you can treat patients. Science treats diseases, but I am sure it ignores the patient. It is important that you treat both the disease and the patient. If you integrate yoga, then you can take care of both the disease and the patient.

—Talk at Hotel Holiday Inn, Athens, 4 October 1982



Impressions

Waiting all my life

Swami Sivamurti recalls an unforgettable experience in Spain

During the early 1980s, Swami Satyananda travelled between India and Europe, and also to Greece. Whenever he travelled to Europe, I had the good fortune to travel with him to many of the different countries, where I had the opportunity to be with him outside the ashram environment. This opened up for me other ways of experiencing, and of seeing things, and other ways of doing things, that I would never have dreamt possible in an ashram environment. It revealed a much broader perspective of the multitudinous dimensions of his personality.

One incident, in particular, I recall from one of his visits to Spain. It was at the end of a satsang that was held in Barcelona. Paramahamsaji had asked me to stay behind. He was leaving one satsang and going on to make his way to another. At the lift door he said to me, "Stay behind." Ah, the flood of disappointment and pain, that you could never really show or express, as it could put others in a difficult position. You had to keep in mind that Paramahamsaji always does things for your good. Not only for your own individual good, but a situation was always brought about so that the best possible good occurred for all in the group, or for all who were present. Knowing this, and believing this philosophy, you need to put it into practice, and not

show dissatisfaction, disappointment, or show that you are being left out. This is because, in reality, it was not like this, and it showed a lack of faith in him and his teachings, and what he was trying to do.

So I went back into the room, still crowded with people. Everyone was speaking Spanish. No one spoke English. I spoke no Spanish. I sat for some time, wondering what I was to do, when a German girl arrived. She came over to me and started to talk. I was thinking, "Maybe this is the reason I'm staying behind. Maybe it has to do with this girl." She told me that she had come to meet her mother, and her mother was waiting to meet Paramahamsaji. However, her mother was very old, and was having difficulty getting to the place on time. It was early in the morning, and she asked whether I knew where Paramahamsaji was, or where he could be found that day. She didn't know that she was talking to just the person who happened to be fortunate enough to know where he was at that moment and, wishing that she were there with him. So I said, "Yes I know where he is."

At that very moment her mother, an old and fragile woman, came in with a beautiful expression. She came straight up to me and said, "I have a question on meditation. Ah, can you help me?" We spoke a little and I said to her, "The person who can really help you, and really give the answer to this question, is not myself, but Swami Satyananda. I think that is who you have come to see." And, at that moment, it became clear to me why I was there. She said, "Yes, that's who I've come to see."

So we got into a taxi, and went straight to the satsang. We entered the room where the satsang

was being held. It was absolutely packed with people. With great skill and dexterity, I managed to make my way through the crowd, to where Paramahamsaji was seated and, at the same time, arranged a seat for the elderly woman to sit by the wall.

What happened next was well beyond my understanding. People were asking Paramahamsaji all



sorts of questions. As usual, he would move from one subject to the next, discussing sublime philosophical and spiritual truths and, next minute, talking to another about a local football match. Then he would discuss the psychologies and the complexities of the mind with another person, and then he would discuss their marital relationship with a couple, or how to bring up their children better. In the midst of all this, the elderly woman saw him, the person she'd been waiting and longing to see, sitting in front of her. Then she stood up, as though she was completely separate and independent from the group in the room. No one really noticed her but, as I had been the one that had brought her in, I noticed her stand up. Everything went into slow motion. It was one of those extraordinary experiences in life when the scene is played out very slowly in front of you. We were so cramped. There was not enough space for me to get to her, and she was further from him than I was. She started to move towards Paramahamsaji. She was to the right of him, and I could see there was no way that she, being so elderly and frail, could make her way through that packed crowd. Someone started to make way for her, without really looking to see who was passing through. At that time, Paramahamsaji was looking to the left of him, carrying on a conversation. Then, suddenly, he turned to the right and, at that very moment, she started to fall across four or five people.

It all happened in a split second, but for me, everything was in slow motion, and so I was able to see very clearly how she fell. She held out her right arm to Paramahamsaji. He moved with lightning speed from his chair and, with great grace, he caught her right hand in his right hand, and held it. It was amazing how no one,

except the people that she fell on, really understood or saw exactly what was happening in the room.

It was a small incident, caught in a moment of time, that no one really seemed to notice except me. As I became squashed between them and as she moved closer to him, I felt I was present in a moment so intimate between two people that I really shouldn't have been there. She looked at him, and he looked at her with such a loving expression, so deep that I felt out of place. But I couldn't move. There was no space to move. I tried to be anonymous and disappear as much as I could, but nevertheless, I was witness to something very deep, beautiful and moving, that took place between them. As he caught her hand and held it, she looked into his eyes and said, "Ah, I've been waiting for this all my life." He looked at her and said, "Yes, I know." They looked at one another for what seemed ages, but was probably only a few seconds. Then, as suddenly as it all started, it finished. Somehow she was back in her chair, and he returned to the woman who had asked him something, before the whole incident started, and picked up where he'd left off in mid-stream. The woman's question was answered without any interruption. It was an incredible moment. I'll never forget the impression it had, or the look on the elderly woman's face, or on his face, as they held hands, and she realized that she was experiencing something that she had been waiting for all her life.

A unique transformation

Sannyasi Patramananda, the owner of the Nepheli Hotel where several of Paramahamsaji's functions in Thessaloniki were held, describes the first experience of her guru.

In 1982, Swami Satyananda arrived in Thessaloniki to inaugurate the new yoga centre in Panorama. It was that blessed morning, on 2nd October 1982, that stamped my life and transformed it forever. My husband, who was very involved in yoga, had gone off to attend the opening, and was accompanying Swami Satyananda to Athens the following day. I was not as enthusiastic about yoga and did not see the need to attend such an event. In fact, I was upset at my husband leaving me on my own.

Then something extraordinary happened. At 8.30 in the morning, I had a vision of Swami Satyananda entering my house. He was actually there, in my home next to me, and he gave me the feeling that he was all around me. His presence revived me, awakened me, and stirred my soul. It took just a minute to feel a complete transformation take place inside me. First, there was an explosion. My life was shattered into pieces. Fears, phobias, pains and insecurities were erased. He made me realize that the life I was leading was not real. The things in my life I considered important, became unimportant. Certain people, upon whom I had placed so much emphasis, now changed, and I realized the truth lay somewhere beyond what I had imagined. Then slowly, slowly, the jumbled pieces of my jigsaw-puzzled life fell into place. Within seconds, he did what would have taken lifetimes to occur. With what words can I describe the indescribable? Needless to say, the next day I was on the first flight to Athens to be with him. And from that day on, I have never left his side.

First impressions

Swami Suryaroopa recalls his first impressions of Paramahamsaji in Greece.

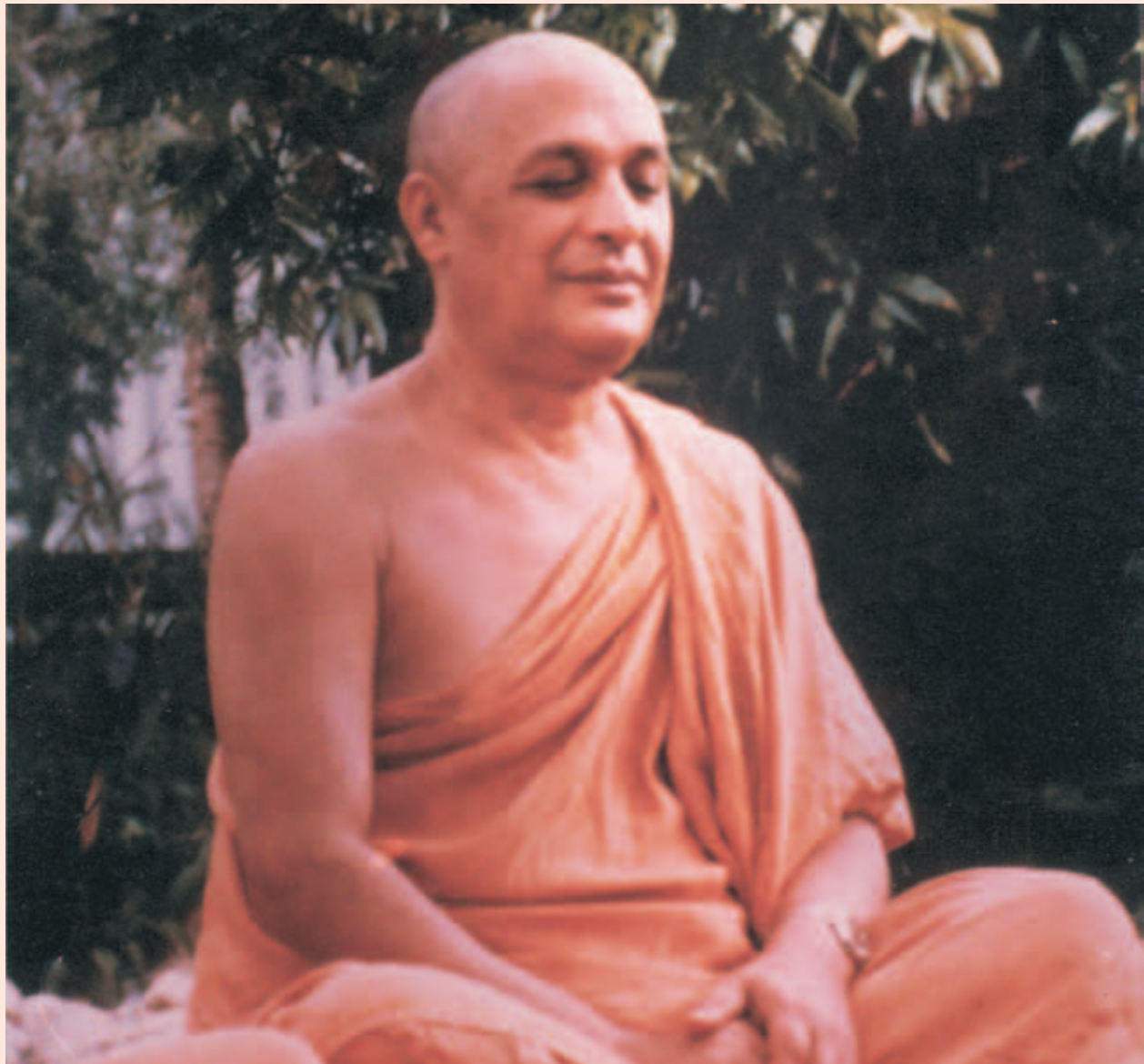
I had often heard flattering words about the great Master who visited from India. However, I had never met him, and I wondered why the people there talked so admiringly of him. Who could he be? Were they all exaggerating? I did not want to be carried away by other people's opinions, and I had my doubts, so I wanted to be convinced personally.

Then the news came, Paramahamsaji would be visiting Greece again. A few of us met at the airport to welcome him. From afar, I felt that he moved quickly, unaffected by the bustle around him.

When he approached, I felt two eyes full of light, and a radiant force surveying his surroundings, not missing anything. Something inside me moved. He still had not said a word, but I felt in me that this human being was different from all the people I had met up to then in my life.

Chronicles

Swami Satyananda's fifth visit included inaugurating the Panorama yoga centre in Thessaloniki and the Pendeli ashram in Athens. A number of press interviews were held. Paramahamsaji emphasized the importance of integral yoga during this year's visit. Accompanied by Swami Satyasangananda, he returned to India, and recalled Swami Niranjanananda, from America, to take over the responsibilities of the Bihar School of Yoga. In 1982, the mandate given by Swami Sivananda to Swami Satyananda had been accomplished.



Greek Knowers of Truth: Diogenes of Sinope

Diogenes of Sinope (also known as Diogenes the Cynic) (412-323 BCE) was born in Sinope (modern Turkey) and died at Corinth. He was a renowned philosopher and orator, and taught the philosophy of Cynicism to Crates whose student, Zeno, shaped the school of Stoicism. He was exiled from his own country and moved to Athens where he declared himself a cosmopolitan in defiance of the democratic city state. He was a disciple of Antisthenes, and made a virtue of poverty by begging for a living and sleeping in a barrel in the marketplace. His provocative behaviour and philosophical stunts were notorious, his most well known being his carrying of a lamp in the daytime as he looked for an honest man. He argued with Plato on his interpretation of Socrates and sabotaged his lectures. He was sold into slavery after being captured by pirates and eventually settled in Corinth. His life was a relentless debunking of the social values and institutions that he saw as corrupt. None of his many writings have survived. However, there are anecdotes of his life in *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* by Diogenes Laërtius, such as this one regarding Alexander the Great, who befriended Diogenes in Corinth. Diogenes was one of the few to ever publicly

mock Alexander and survive. Diogenes Laërtius tells us that Alexander wanted to do something for Diogenes and asked him what he desired. The philosopher replied, "Stop blocking my light." Alexander, being greatly impressed by this remark, said to his followers, "But truly, if I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes."

Swami Satyananda on Diogenes, Socrates and other wise people

In the olden days St. Francis of Assisi, St. Andreas, St. Paul, St. Domingo and so many others, do you know how they were living? They were not living in the great monasteries; they were living in small huts. You know the name of the man in Athens who used to live in the wine drum? They threw his drum away, but somebody bought another one for him. People thought he was crazy, but he was great. How did Socrates live? Did he live in a monastery? He used to have quarrels with his wife every day. Likewise these saints suffered. They suffered physically. They suffered for others and they purified their body by fasting, penance. That is why these old saints in Christianity were beaming with brilliance. But please remember that saints are never Hindu and never Christian, they are never registered. I was born in a Hindu family but I am not a Hindu. If I had been born in a Christian family I would not be a Christian today. I am no Hindu, I am no Muslim, no Arab, no Christian, no man, no woman; I am Self, Self, Self.

Sayings by Diogenes of Sinope

- Modesty is the colour of virtue.
- No man is hurt but by himself.
- The art of being a slave is to rule one's master.

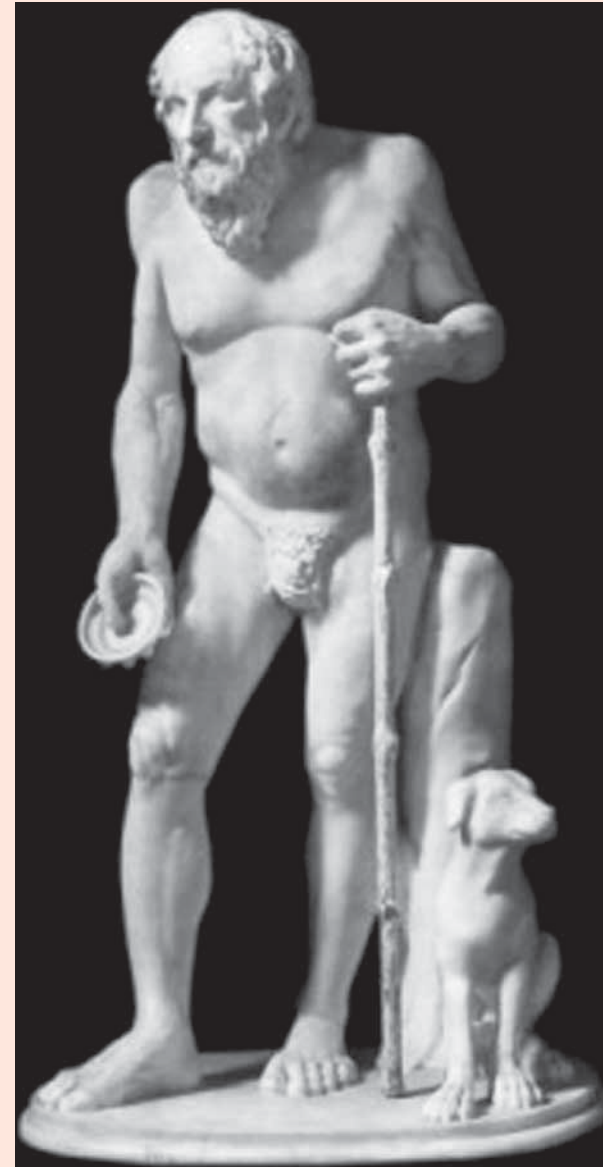




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1983 was the only year that Swami Satyananda did not visit Greece, since he started visiting in 1978 and stopped travelling in 1985.

A New Phase in Life

On the day of Basant Panchami, 19th January, Swami Niranjan was appointed President of the Bihar School of Yoga (BSY), Munger, India, by Swami Satyananda.

The administration of the Bihar School of Yoga (BSY) was handed over to Swami Niranjan. In 1983,

Swami Satyananda formally left the presidency of BSY. Swami Niranjan, though barely seen in Munger in the last eleven years, was appointed President of BSY and five years later, in 1988, was made Swami Satyananda's spiritual successor.

1983 was the year that the Bihar School of Yoga took a new turn. Swami Satyananda had announced to everyone that he was embarking on a new journey of his life. In a satsang during this time he said, "There have been moments in my life after Swami Sivananda's mahasamadhi when I have clearly felt his presence and heard his voice. Last year in Puerto Rico, I was sitting alone on the seashore when I heard him say to me, 'You are now free from your ashram life'. He released me; I became free. For twenty years I have been working to spread yoga from door to door and shore to shore, in obedience to my guru's command. Now, I have been given new instructions and my duty is to humanity."

Devotees Visiting Munger

In 1981, Swami Sivamurti took the first Greek group of devotees to visit Munger, laying the foundations for many visits to follow. In 1983 a Greek group of five devotees attended a course on Kriya Yoga and Tattwa Shuddhi which was repeated in 1986, this time led by Swami Sivamurti. The last visit to see Paramahamsaji in Munger was in 1988 when a Greek group of forty disciples, accompanied by Swami Sivamurti, attended the auspicious celebrations of his last Guru Poornima there. Munger reopened its doors to foreign visitors in 1992 after a period of two years. Two Greek groups visited Munger in 1992 and received the darshan of Swami Niranjanananda. Greek devotees continue to make the annual pilgrimage to Munger to pay homage to the birthplace of Satyananda Yoga from the first visit in 1981 until the present day.



The first Greek group to visit Munger, 1981

Impressions

Egodectomy

Swami Sivamurti tells of one of her clearest memories of egodectomy with Swami Satyananda.

I recall one of my very deep experiences in karma yoga, and Swami Satyananda always taught through experience. When I first went to the Bihar School of Yoga in 1975, for a period of time the seva yoga that I had been given was to paint dust covers for Swami Satyananda's books. From morning until night I was involved in painting the dust covers in the ashram library. Painting was something I enjoyed very much, as through form and colour, I found I could express myself easily. I had been painting for many weeks, and one day in the evening, a swami came to let me know that Swami Satyananda was calling me to his room.

I went with all speed to his room, as we always moved quickly in the ashram. We seldom walked. We ran from department to department. So I ran to his room and found him seated there with a group of other residents of the ashram. He said, "Have you brought them?" I said, "Brought what?" He said, "Your paintings." I said, "No." I turned around, went out, ran back to the room, picked up my portfolio, and feeling very proud and content with my work, ran back again to his room and presented him with my portfolio.

He took all the different paintings out, and turned them around and upside down, as though trying to find the correct angle of vision, so as to be sure whether he

was holding it in the right position or not. Then he threw it on the floor and laughed. He picked up another one, turned it around a bit, examined it, then threw it on the floor. He picked up a third, roared with laughter at it, at which moment everyone else in the room also roared with laughter as they looked at it. Then he threw it behind him on the floor. He picked up a fourth one, and threw it on the floor. In such a way, he went through the whole portfolio, picking up all my paintings, laughing at them, appearing to try to find the way in which they should be

held so as to make some sense of them. And then, he threw it on the floor. At that moment I wished the floor would open underneath me and I could just descend quietly into the ground and make my retreat. But, of course, no such thing happened. I stood there, absorbing the lesson that was being given to me through this very deep, and at that moment, very painful, awkward and embarrassing experience. After he'd thrown all the paintings on the floor, he resumed his conversation in Hindi with those present, as though I did not exist.



Greek devotees attending a course at BSY, 1983

My one and only thought was to get out of the room as fast as possible. So, slowly and making every effort not to draw any further attention to myself and as quietly as possible, I picked up all my paintings, put them in the folder, and quickly removed myself from the room.

That lesson, although very difficult, brought home to me, in full force, the attachment I had to my own work. Later, in satsang, at another point of time, Swami Satyananda explained that one of the main problems with artists was that they were always attached to their creation. They couldn't let go. It seems to me, looking back, that one of Swami Satyananda's methods of

training us, and making us aware of our own conditioning and our way of thinking and behaving, and how much the role of the ego played in our lives, was to let us have an experience fast and efficiently, and then, later, at another point in some form of general discussion, or at some other moment in time, he would explain it. Not directly relating to the experience, but relating to it in such a way that whoever the experience had happened to, understood, quite clearly, that he was referring to an incident that that person had gone through. In that way he clarified everything, and revealed the reasons behind the experience further.



Kriya Yoga and Tattwa Shuddhi course, 1986

Chronicles

1983 heralded a year of momentous changes in Munger with the succession of Swami Niranjan to the presidency of the Bihar School of Yoga, in conjunction with his overseeing the completion of the construction of the seven-storey Ganga Darshan building. Meanwhile, in Greece Swami Sivamurti conducted a Teacher Training Course with the assistance of Swami Yogamudrananda who spent three months in the country. Although Swami Satyananda did not visit in 1983, much was awaiting Greece in the following year, with two visits by Paramahamsaji in 1984.



Greek Knowers of Truth: Xenophon of Athens

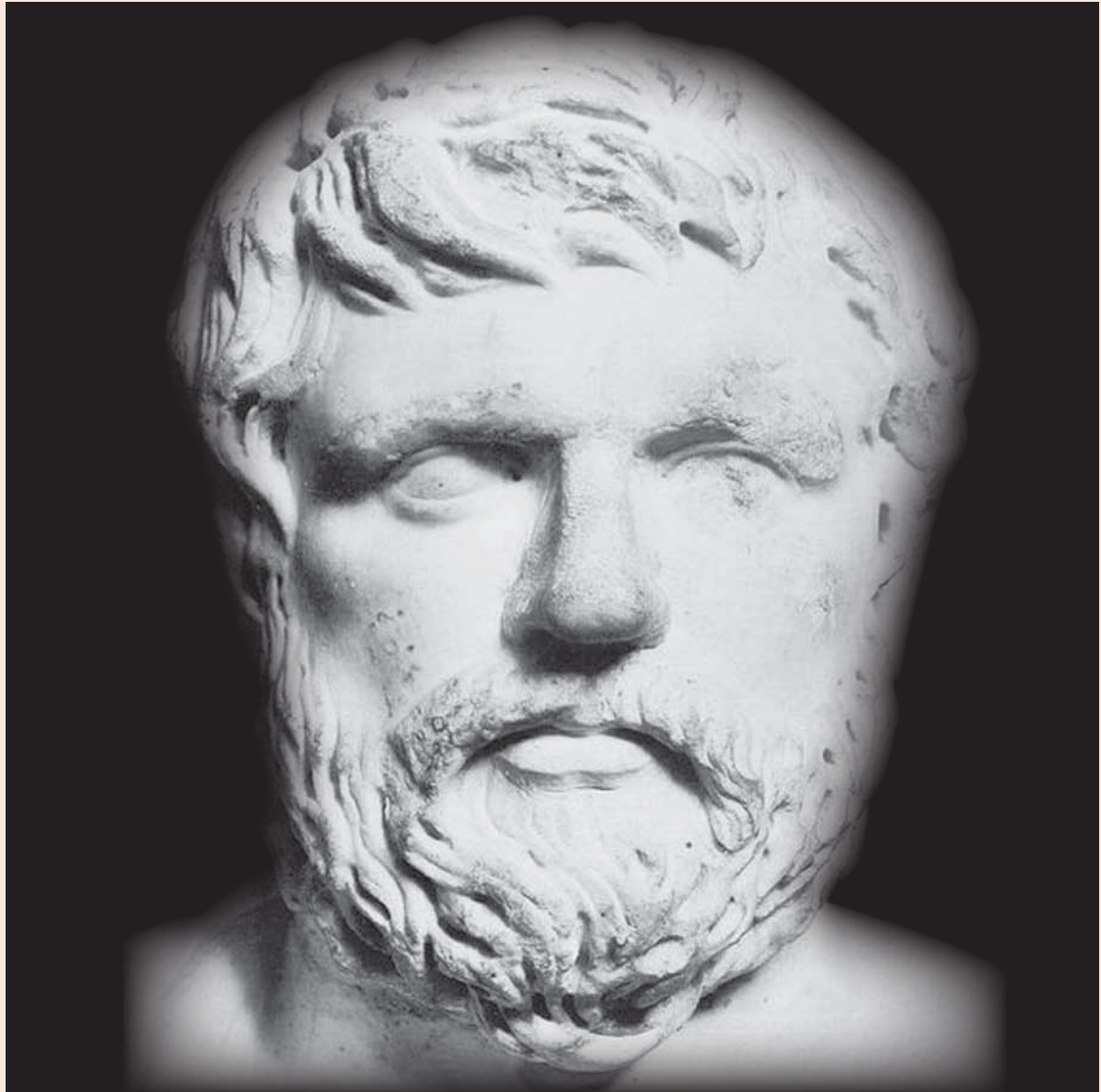
Xenophon (430-354 BCE) was a Greek historian, soldier, and mercenary. He is known for his writings of Greek history of the 4th century BCE, and his written record of the sayings of Socrates. He was exiled for some time from Athens, and became closely involved with Spartan politics. He was one of the first thinkers to argue that the ordered world must have been conceived by a God or gods. He died in either Corinth or Athens.

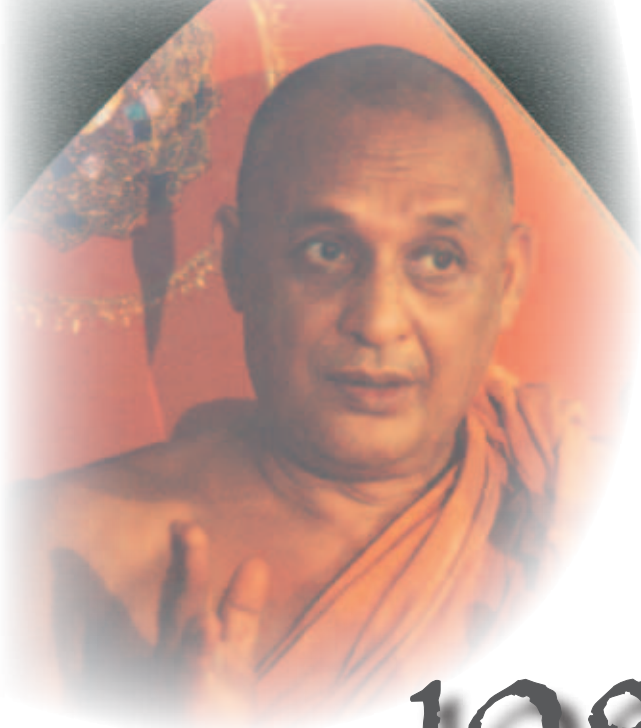
Swami Satyananda on truth as a virtue

- The practice of truth should be when both parties are functioning on the same level, because truth is a virtue, truth is a dharma, truth is very tender and many people who are not virtuous misuse this quality.
- You are not the one others think you are. You are the eternal Self, radiant and pure.

Sayings by Xenophon

- If you consider what are called the virtues in mankind, you will find their growth is assisted by education and cultivation.
- The true test of a leader is whether his followers will adhere to his cause from their own volition, enduring the most arduous hardships without being forced to do so, and remaining steadfast in the moments of greatest peril.





1984

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Day-by-Day-Itinerary

Swami Satyananda's 1984 tour was keenly awaited following his last visit in 1982. He arrived in Crete for a six-week tour of fourteen Greek towns and islands. Swami

Satyasangananda (India) accompanied him. During his tour he visited the ashram at Pendeli and presided over the Guru Poornima celebrations in Thessaloniki. He also visited Alexandroupolis, Athens, Crete (Agios Nicolaos, Chania, Heraklio, and Rethimno), Kalamata, Katerini, Mitilini, Patra, Rhodes, Sparta, Thessaloniki, and Volos.

Monday, 23 April

- Swami Satyananda arrived in Crete, where many devotees waited at the airport to welcome him to Greece.

Tuesday, 24 April

- Swami Satyananda's opening discourse at Samaria Hotel, Chania, was entitled 'Yoga: Our Precious Heritage'. He spoke about yoga and its applications in outer-space projects, recent research developments in the US on yoga and its effects on brain wave patterns, as well as its effects on sport medicine. Swami Satyananda emphasized that yoga is a science available to all.

Wednesday, 25 April

- There was widespread media interest in Swami Satyananda's tour of Greece and he gave a press interview at Hotel Doma, Chania. He answered questions on topics such as: What is yoga? What is an aura? And how can one deal with stress? Swami Satyananda travelled to Rethimno, Crete's third largest town. The title of his discourse, given at the Town Hall, was 'The Purpose of Yoga, Pranayama, Mantra, Yantra and Dhyana'. He explained that dhyana is not only a Sanskrit word, but a universal term meaning total awareness.

Thursday, 26 April

- Swami Satyananda travelled to Heraklio, the capital of Crete, where he delivered a lecture at the Atlantis

Hotel. The lecture's title was 'Experiencing the Self'. He was greeted by an enthusiastic audience of three hundred people and spoke on transcending the mind, and the necessity of inner self-discipline.

Friday, 27 April

- During the satsang at Rethimno and Iraklio, Swami Satyananda spoke about Socrates, and the similarities between Greek and Hindu mythologies. He also discussed the differences between philosophy and religion.

Saturday, 28 April

- The final discourse at Crete was in Agios Nicolaos, on 'The Revival of the Science of Yoga'. Swami Satyananda answered many interesting questions during the satsang that followed.

Monday, 30 April

- Swami Satyananda was welcomed to the island of Rhodes. His discourse was called 'Exoteric and Esoteric Yoga'. He spoke on the esoteric and exoteric paths of yoga, noting that Buddha, Socrates, the Vedas, and the Upanishads also gave the universal message of yoga to the world, which is to "Know thyself".

Wednesday, 2 May

- Poorna and karma sannyasa initiations were given at Athens yoga centre in Kypseli, Athens. Swami Satyananda gave a public discourse on 'Transcending Karma' at Omilos Exipiretiton, Athens. A press conference followed at the Holiday Inn, Athens.

Thursday, 3 May

- Approximately eight hundred people attended Swami Satyananda's discourse on 'Yoga, Tantra

and Meditation’ at the Holiday Inn, Athens. Topics discussed included the methods to realize higher consciousness, and the awakening of kundalini. The discourse was followed by a press conference.

Friday, 4 May

- Satsang was held at the Athens yoga centre in Kypseli, where one hundred people gathered to hear Swami Satyananda answer questions on a wide range of topics. Later in the day, another satsang was held at Kypseli.

Saturday, 5 May

- Satsang was held at the Athens yoga centre, Kypseli. As an opening satsang question, Swami Satyananda was asked if the truth should always be spoken. A second satsang was also given.

Sunday, 6 May

- Swami Satyananda travelled to Thessaloniki and held satsang at Panorama, where he said that when Russian cosmonauts went into space, a yoga teacher went with them for scientific investigation. A second satsang was given.

Monday, 7 May

- On the island of Mitilini, Swami Satyananda gave a lecture on ‘Meditation’ at the Municipal Theatre. He later held satsang at the Xenia Hotel. Initiations were given for karma sannyasa.

Thursday, 10 May

- Swami Satyananda gave a lecture at the Astor Hotel, Patra. Swami Sivamurti recalls that this talk was the most inspired of the tour and, at the end, there was a standing ovation for him. On the way out of the

lecture to the hotel lift, Swami Satyananda turned to her and said, “Sivamurti, it doesn’t matter whether anyone remembers a word of what I said, if they only remember just one word, and that word is ‘awareness’, then my lecture has been a success.”

Saturday, 12 May

- Swami Satyananda gave a discourse on ‘The Purpose of Yoga’ at the Exoraistiki Leshi Volou in Volos.

Monday, 14 May

- ‘What is Yoga?’ was the subject of Swami Satyananda’s discourse at Katerini’s cultural centre, where he spoke about the great thinkers and philosophers of Greece.

Tuesday, 15 May

- Thessalonikans warmly greeted Swami Satyananda at the Makedonia Palace Hotel where he lectured on ‘Yoga, the Final Experience’. He also gave a satsang.

Wednesday, 16 May

- Satsang was given at the Nepheli Hotel, Thessaloniki, where Swami Satyananda was asked about antar mouna, mantra and raja yoga. Satsang was also given in Panorama yoga centre later that day.

Thursday, 17 May

- Swami Satyananda gave the final public discourse for this part of his tour at Alexandroupolis. A press conference was held. A lecture followed: ‘Yoga: Our Precious Heritage’.

Sunday, May 20

- Satsang was at the Athens yoga centre Kypseli. Swami Satyananda discussed the guru-disciple

relationship and the four general categories of disciples.

- Accompanied by Swami Satyasangananda, Swami Satyananda travelled to Italy for three weeks where he was the guest of the Italian Yoga Federation. On his return to Greece, he presided over the first Guru Poornima celebrations in Europe, held at Thessaloniki.

Monday, 2 July

- An enthusiastic audience warmly greeted Swami Satyananda at the Hotel Filoxenia in Kalamata, for his discourse on ‘Yoga: Our Precious Heritage’. He was welcomed very warmly by the Kalamatians, who have never been quite the same since his first visit in 1978. Swami Satyananda said to them, “I thought I sent Sivamurti to a desert, but I can see I sent her to an oasis!”

Tuesday, 3 July

- At the Apollo Hotel, in the city of Sparta, Swami Satyananda gave the discourse entitled ‘Yoga: Our Precious Heritage’. Swami Satyananda discussed ‘Spartan Health’.

Wednesday, 11 July to Thursday, 13 July

- Guru Poornima was held in the Nepheli Hotel, Thessaloniki. Swami Satyananda called it ‘Nepheli ashram’, as so many yogic seminars have been held there over the years and its proprietors are two of his disciples. Swami Satyananda spoke about the importance of the guru-disciple relationship. On the third day, Guru Pooja took place at the Thessaloniki yoga centre in Panorama. Hundreds of people attended, as well as Swami Prakashananda (Germany), and Swami Anandananda (Italy).



Now, in yoga they talk about samadhi. You may have heard about it from time to time. Samadhi means "forgetting yourself". Samadhi means disassociating your mind from external objects. It is a type of mental hibernation. Frogs hibernate; that is physical hibernation. In yoga you can hibernate mentally for ten days, three months, six years, or for any length of time. If you hibernate, you close your eyes and open your eyes after ten years, and you, the astronaut, will find yourself orbiting around Saturn. Well, this is one glimpse of the practical application of yoga in the field of science.

From the Media

Paramahansa Satyananda states that yoga cures everything.

Article by Mr Vakoulopoulos in Vradini newspaper, 4 May 1984

If you suffer from asthma or migraines or even if you have heart problems, do not get disappointed. There is a solution: yoga. The above was stated by Paramahansa Satyananda, an authentic Indian guru.

Paramahansa Satyananda was born in 1923 in a small town at the foothills of the Himalayas. As he said, he was blessed by many sages and saints who passed through his town to visit the Himalayas. When he was nineteen years old, he left home on a quest to find his guru. In 1956, he founded the International Yoga Fellowship Movement. For forty years he has been travelling around the world teaching spirituality through yoga. Evolution is a natural process in the vegetal, the animal and the human kingdom. The master of yoga said that humans shall reach the higher state of evolution, but thousands of years will be needed. He concluded that yoga is one of the safest and surest ways of accelerating human evolution.

Yoga is not a religion, nor a political movement, but a means for spiritual and physical expansion of human potential. Yoga is not related to illusions and isn't connected to any theory regarding sex. Paramahansa Satyananda states, "Yoga is a science which enabled the human being to attain one of the greatest achievements, the ability to concentrate, to control his mind and his life."

At present, as our Indian visitor mentioned, there are tens of thousands of yoga teachers in Europe and as for the students, they are far more. Among the students are many scientists, politicians, businessmen and others who wish to find peace, without isolating themselves; to learn discipline without shaving their heads. The yoga centre is in Pendeli, where fifteen people may stay.

The efficiency of the yogic techniques will be demonstrated tomorrow at the Holiday Inn, Athens.



Swami Satyananda at the Holiday Inn, Athens

Yoga: Our Precious Heritage

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Many people misunderstand yoga to be a religion, therefore it is important that we explain to everybody what yoga is. I think that in the western world yoga was not properly introduced and it was not explained thoroughly. Often when I visited countries, many people and denominations were a bit scared about what I was saying. Therefore, I will try to explain to you that yoga is not a religion but is a science like any other science.

For over fifty years, scientists in America, in Europe, in India, in Russia, Poland and Japan have been scientifically studying yoga because yoga claims that it can cure many diseases. Yoga claims that it can cure mental sicknesses and help you to develop your mental powers. First of all scientists scoffed at these claims. How is it possible that yoga practices can cure illness? How can yoga cure mental and emotional sickness? Therefore, the scientists wanted to do some research work.

For many centuries the swamis, the teachers from India, have been coming to the West. One of the outstanding gurus went to America in the last century. He inspired many great scientists to work on yoga. Of course, in my brief speech, I may not be able to tell you what work has been done on yoga by the scientists but I can tell you that in the last fifty years, the volume of scientific research on yoga is beyond your imagination. Even the scientists of Soviet Russia have engaged themselves in scientific studies in yoga. Therefore, nobody should have any doubt about yoga being a science.

Yoga in outer space

On 3rd April this year, a yoga teacher was sent into orbit with yoga lessons. From this you can understand that yoga is definitely not a religion. If yoga were a religion, then a yoga teacher could not have gone into space. I do not think that he went into space to talk about religion. Russia would be the last country to accept it. The purpose was to find out how yoga influences the difficulties which these astronauts face in weightless space.



Astronauts have been facing a lot of physical and emotional problems when they orbit in space. These physiological, emotional and mental problems start before they go into orbit. Due to weightlessness, they have a lot of physical and mental problems, like loss of hunger and then gradual deterioration of the muscular systems in the body and deeper fears in the mind. Therefore, they wanted to find out how yoga could help these conditions.

One of the greatest problems in space is monotony. If you are there for three months you will get bored. If you have to stay in space for about a year, you can imagine how monotonous that would be, because you don't have nightclubs there, no beaches, no recreation, no beautiful market, and this monotony, this boredom, causes sickness. This sickness is nervous sickness, that is, it hits your nervous system.

In yoga they talk about samadhi. You may have heard about it from time to time. Samadhi means 'forgetting yourself'. Samadhi means disassociating your mind from external objects. It is a type of mental hibernation. Frogs hibernate; that is physical hibernation. In yoga you can hibernate mentally for ten days, three months, six years, or for any length of time. If you hibernate, you close your eyes and open your eyes after ten years, and you, the astronaut, will find yourself orbiting around Saturn. This is one glimpse of the practical application of yoga in the field of science.

Yoga in sport

Yoga can be applied in various areas of life. Many times people misunderstand yoga to be only spiritual. I want to tell you that yoga is not only spiritual but a complete science. In America, when they prepare their team for the Olympics, they teach them yoga. They teach them concentration and what they teach is very interesting.



They tell their sportsmen to concentrate on a yantra, a symbol, a triangle in the forehead and in the centre of the triangle they ask them to concentrate on a dot or bindu. When the concentration on the point becomes perfect, you attain perfection in your art.

This year in the Winter Olympics there was a beautiful idea. When the Americans were performing their act, they had to ski and go to one point, take a rifle and shoot at five targets, then go further, do it again, and go further and do it again. They had to shoot at five targets and be at the other end as quickly as possible. The practice which they were taught was yogic concentration. In order to shoot those five targets exactly, they were asked to concentrate on the triangle and the point in the centre so that they

could get it perfect. This is just another glimpse of how yoga is a science which is related with our life here.

America: research into brain wave patterns

Many other researches have been conducted in America, Poland, Russia, as well as in Japan. The American scientists say that when you practise yoga, you can alter the brain waves. This is very important because if you can alter the brain waves, you can alter the pressure on the heart and the nervous system. You know that in the brain we have various types of waves. According to the level of stress, these brain waves differ from time to time. While we are thinking, dreaming, sleeping, or working, the brain waves are different.

If you can change or alter the waves of your brain through your willpower, you can relax whenever you like. You know many people cannot sleep. They want to sleep but they cannot sleep. Then they take sleeping pills. Sleeping pills can help you for a day, for a week, for a month, but they cannot teach you how to alter the brain waves. They can interfere with your nervous system, that is all.

In yoga we teach how to manipulate your brain waves. If you can alter your brain waves and produce delta waves, you can fall asleep immediately. Or if you can produce alpha waves, you can relax. The question is, how to produce alpha waves? How to produce delta waves? By sleeping pills? Do you believe it? No, scientists do not believe it. Scientists never believe that drugs can alter the brain waves. This is the main subject matter of yoga. Many experiments were conducted and are being conducted in America on the effect of yoga on brain wave patterns.

Hippies and mantra

In 1968 I went to San Francisco. At that time the hippies, the 'flower children' were growing. I call it the 'Hippie Age', not 'Nuclear Age'. When they heard that a swami or a guru or teacher had come, they came to see me, and some of them were equipped with earphones. I asked them what the earphones were. They called it an Aquarius earphone.

This earphone was producing a sound: Aum . . . Aum . . . Aum . . . all the time. I asked, "Why do you do all this?" They said that by this sound they were able to control their brain waves. The important point is: a sound has a definite effect on the brain wave pattern and when the sound is produced rhythmically for a period of time, then it creates an effect on the brain cycles.

Not only a few hundred, but a few thousand studies have been done on the effect of sound on the physical body, and the conclusions are these. When you produce



a sound, when you practise a mantra, it alters the brain waves. It decreases the necessity of oxygen consumption. It maintains a steady blood pressure. It relaxes the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems and has an all-round beneficial effect on the bio-chemical structure of the body. I have myself found that when you are practising the mantra, when you are practising one particular sound, at that time the behaviour of the heart is cordial and healthy. This is a very short glimpse of the experiments done in the United States.

Poland: research into headstand

In Poland they have worked on yoga postures. These yoga postures, which look like exercises, are not exercises. You cannot compare yoga postures or yoga asanas with

exercises. It has been found that yoga postures and exercise have two different effects on the body. Polish scientists and doctors have done research on postures and pranayama, but their research into the headstand pose is outstanding.

The headstand pose is called sirshasana. This yoga posture is a most important one for the man of today because he thinks all the time and his brain and mind are over-exercised. At the same time, the brain suffers from anaemia because we think all the time. The consumption of oxygen is very great, and normally the body cannot produce it. It is like feeding an elephant with a few kilograms of rice.

With each and every thought, you are consuming something in the body. Have you ever seen a tape recorder run by batteries? When the tape recorder is running it is consuming the batteries, and if you keep on running the tape recorder for forty-eight hours, the battery will go flat. The same thing happens to us. Many times our brain goes flat.

According to the bulk of thinking, you must be able to replenish the energy in the brain. In yoga, there are two methods of supplying energy to the brain and conserving the energy. By meditation, concentration and samadhi, you conserve energy, just as you conserve your battery in the tape recorder for whenever you need it. Whenever you need it, you put on the tape recorder; when you don't need it, put it off. Do you know how to put the brain off and put it on? No, you don't know.

There is only one science in the world which teaches you how to switch on and switch off the brain and that is yoga. In the night when you go to sleep you forget to switch off. You are sleeping, your body is sleeping, but your tape recorder is on. Your brain is working. It is consuming energy. It is consuming oxygen. It is

pressurizing the heart. It is creating stress on the nervous system, because you do not know how to switch off the brain when you do not need it.

This is what we teach in yoga, the direct method to switch off and the indirect method to switch off. One thing is, switch off the brain; secondly, replenish the energy for the functioning of the brain. The scientists in Poland have found that in the headstand pose you supply rich blood to the brain so that damages of the brain are repaired. When you are practising the headstand pose, the consumption of oxygen is minimal. That means that by practising the headstand pose, you are saving oxygen which is necessary fuel for the body. We call it 'fuel economy', spending less and less energy. With the headstand pose it has also been found that the respiration rate comes down.

In all the yoga practices it has been found that the respiration is absolutely under control. Another important thing they have found is that there are three types of tensions: muscular tensions which are related to the physical body, mental tensions, and emotional tensions. These tensions are different from each other but are mostly interrelated. When you practise yoga postures, the physical and muscular tensions come down and this has been measured by scientific apparatus. The serpent posture, bhujaṅgāsana, and many other yoga postures bring the physical tensions down. This and much more work has been done by the scientists and doctors in Poland.

Russia: research in telepathy

Now, let us go to the Soviet Union. Have they done anything on yoga? What have they done? Of course, whatever Russians do, they don't talk much about it, but at the same time, two documents have been taken out of the Soviet Union in the last twenty years. These were published in the international market. The title of the first



document is 'Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain'. The title of the second document is 'Possibility of the Improbable', which means, 'even this can happen'.

These two documents give details about the scientific research done in the Soviet Union on the human mind and its potential. When the mind is distracted, it is weak. When you think so many things at one time, it is weak. When your mind is dissipated it is weak, but when you are able to concentrate the energies of the mind through the practices of yoga, then the mind becomes very powerful.

The mind is a type of energy. It is not a bundle of habits. The mind is not psychological stuff. The mind is not good, not bad. Like electrical energy, the mind is also energy. You have heard about radio energy, electromagnetic energy, sound, solar, wind energy. Similarly, there is mind energy. A thought which comes into your mind, imagination which comes into your mind, is a form of that energy. Light is a form of energy. A heater is a form of energy, an air-conditioner is a form of energy. There are many manifestations of energy. How can you think? It is because of that energy. This energy is called mental energy and in most people it is in a dissipated condition.

The dissipated energy of the mind should be concentrated. If you can concentrate your mind, if you can concentrate your awareness, you can transmit the energy through space. A thought is like a wave, it has a frequency and velocity. Every thought has frequency. You understand frequency? Short wave frequency,

medium wave, long wave. Now, the rule is, the lower the velocity the greater the frequency; the greater the velocity the lower the frequency. Our minds have velocity and no frequency, but if you can stop the mind there will be no velocity but there will be frequency.

They experimented on this in the Soviet Union. They selected two subjects; one was the transmitter and the other was the receiver. One was transmitting a thought and the other was receiving it. At first it was done at a distance of one metre. As and when they succeeded, the distance was increased. Can you believe that the last distance was one thousand six hundred miles? That is to say, one man was able to transmit his thought for one thousand six hundred miles and the other was able to receive his thought at a distance of one thousand six hundred miles. After this experiment was finished, both of them were enclosed in Faraday cages and put into the ocean. In a Faraday cage, neither electromagnetic waves, nor radio waves, no waves could penetrate, but thought waves could. You can increase the frequencies of your mental waves and they know no barrier.

This science of mind in yoga is known as raja yoga. The science of raja yoga tells us that the mind is the most powerful tool in the hands of a person. If you can discipline your mental waves or you can control them, then you are master of your own mind. He who is a master of his own mind is a yogi or a swami. The eminent psychologist, Dr Carl Jung, has also spoken about the importance of yoga in disciplining one's mind and emotions.

Japan: research into energy

Now, I am going to tell you about a very important experiment conducted in Japan. In Japan I have a very good friend, Dr Hiroshi Motoyama. He has a very important association there and I am a member and advisor of that

association. I will tell you about an experiment. Please listen with great care.

In a small room, a girl is sitting in meditation. She is concentrating at the bottom of the spine between the excretory and urinary passages. This particular centre which I am talking about is considered to be a very important centre, the seat of a dormant energy force within us. Is it not funny that the portion which is considered to be impure should be the seat of energy? People do not want to think about it, they do not want to talk about it, but that is the place where the primordial energy is dormant. The girl was concentrating on that point.

Scientists had fixed electrodes on different parts of her body. In the next room, an electroencephalogram, an electrocardiogram, a mind-mirror, and other instruments were recording what was happening to her. A video camera was also fixed on her in a slanting way in that absolutely dark room. The camera was focused on the lower part of her body between the navel and the urinary organ.

She was meditating for half an hour in the lotus posture and concentrating on that lower centre. Her breath was becoming more and more refined, the respiration rate was going down. The heart was idle or in a state of inertia, the brain waves almost slowed to alpha, in between alpha and delta. After half an hour her meditation was over and she came out of the room.

I saw that film which was focused on the lower part of her body during that half hour. For the first twelve minutes there was nothing. It was just total darkness because there was no light in the room. It was a perfectly insulated room; there were no electrical charges, the whole room was heavily insulated by lead. After twelve minutes, suddenly, a very tiny spark of light began to shine like a star. It had no uniform shape. It looked like a glow

worm. The light was of a mercury type. Sometimes the tiny light began to swell, became larger. Sometimes it would move straight, a little bit upward and then again come down, then it would go to the left or right and come back. It was behaving very erratically. This kind of game by that little spark of light continued for eight minutes and finally it disappeared. It could not go very high. Perhaps it could only rise up to the second plexus.

In your spine you have six plexus, six psychic centres. The first centre is in the perineum, the second is in the sacral area, the third is in the solar plexus, the fourth is in the cardiac plexus, the fifth in the cervical plexus and the sixth is on top of the spine. This particular spark of light was not able to go beyond the second centre.

Dr Hiroshi Motoyama asked me what the light was. The room was lead-insulated. There was no electricity in the room, only a camera was focused. Was it the energy of the mind? Was it the concentrated form of her mind? Or was it some energy which she was able to explode from her lower centre? All these questions are answered in yoga.

Yoga: available to all

The yogic practices which we do are a type of insurance. You know what insurance is? Periodically you pay some premium though you don't need to do that every day. In the same way, if you practise yoga every day, you are paying a premium. This premium helps you whenever you need it. Therefore, today, in the last part of the twentieth century, yoga has become the most popular science throughout the world. Now, when yoga has gone into space, you will have to understand that it has not gone there as a religion. It has gone there in order to help.

—Discourse at Samaria Hotel, Hania,
Crete, 24 April 1984

The Purpose of Yoga: Pranayama, Mantra, Yantra, Dhyana

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

You know that yoga has become very important in the last few years. Throughout the world, thinkers and scientists have been studying the practical utility of yoga in day-to-day life. People throughout the world want to know what exactly yoga is. They also want to know whether yoga can help them in their day-to-day life. In fact, yoga is a very old science which has been forgotten by people.

The main purpose of yoga is to enlighten the individual about his inner nature. Man is limited by his mind and body. Due to these limitations he is not able to understand the real truth. Therefore, sometimes he feels greatly frustrated about his own existence. He finds that the life which he is leading is not complete. He tries to understand the purpose of life and the philosophy of life.

The philosophy of yoga helps everyone to understand the truth about his own nature. However, it is important that before we try to understand the philosophy of life, our own minds and our own personalities must be in total harmony. If we analyze our own selves, we will find that our minds are not stable or concentrated; the philosophy, the idea and the doctrine which we think of is not



complete. Therefore, the practice of yoga is so important for everybody to realize their own Self.

Dhyana yoga: meditation

There are various forms of yoga, but out of all those forms I am going to tell you this evening about the path of meditation, which is considered to be the most important form of yoga. Meditation is known as dhyana yoga. When the mind becomes one-pointed, then we achieve meditation. It is not easy to concentrate the mind. The various realms of the mind: the conscious mind, the subconscious mind and the unconscious mind, all three have to be harmonized.

One of the most important and greatest achievements of human life is meditation, but when you close your eyes you are not able to get the proper direction because the waves of the mind are so turbulent, so restless. The science which teaches meditation is known as raja yoga. It is a classical system which teaches us various techniques to help develop deep and profound meditation. Now let us make it very clear that by suppressing the mind you cannot achieve meditation. If you force your mind, even then you cannot achieve meditation, but there are ways, methods and techniques which automatically give you the experience of meditation.

Pratyahara: separation from perceptions

The mind functions on three levels. These three levels of mind are known in modern psychology as conscious, subconscious and unconscious. In yoga philosophy they are known as the gross mind, the astral mind and the causal mind. Through these three levels of mind you have objective and sensorial experiences.

There is a relationship, there is an interlink between the mind, the object and the senses. The mind experiences an object via the senses. Tasting, hearing, touching, seeing,

all these experiences which you get through the senses are cognized by the mind. This process of cognition of objects is to be stopped in meditation. When you are deep in meditation, you don't hear external sounds and you do not have any experience of the senses, as the connection between the mind and the object is separated. Therefore, the first step to meditation is to separate the mind from the senses. If you are not able to separate the mind from the senses, meditation cannot take place. There are many ways of achieving this. Many people try drugs, with the

help of which they are able to separate the mind from the senses. In yoga there are techniques by which you can separate your mind from the senses. One of the most powerful is the technique of pranayama.

Pranayama: balancing energy

What is pranayama? Pranayama is a technique of breathing by which the brain is influenced. You should know that the brain has two hemispheres. These two hemispheres of the brain are connected with the two

nostrils. The breath which you inhale through the left nostril influences the right hemisphere. Similarly, when you breathe through the right nostril, that influences the left hemisphere. The two hemispheres of the brain I am talking about and the two breathing systems are related to the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. When you practise pranayama, then you are creating an influence, an impression, on the two hemispheres of the brain, thereby you are creating balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. When there is harmony in the nervous system and the brain, the mind separates itself from the senses.

The science of pranayama is a very important science and I will tell you a little more about it. I must make it very clear to you that pranayama does not give you meditation directly, but it helps you to separate the mind from the process of cognition and perception.

In the practice of pranayama, first of all you have to assume a steady posture. The spine has to be upright and straight and the eyes should remain closed. The inner gaze must be fixed either on the tip of the nose or in the mid-eyebrow centre.

Pranayamas are of various types, some for people who have a very restless mind and others for people who have a calm and quiet mind. There is a pranayama known as bhasrika which is practised very rapidly. You go on breathing fast, after ten minutes you close your eyes and then you start practising meditation. This pranayama is for people who have a very active, restless mind. There are different types of people. Some are naturally introverted and some are always extroverted. Therefore, pranayama has to be understood according to this difference in the quality of the person. The people who are very restless, their mind does not stay at one point for even one second. If they are trying to concentrate on one point, after some





seconds they find that their mind is thinking of something else and they didn't know it. It is for these people that bhastrika pranayama is very effective.

For other people there is a very important pranayama. You first breathe in through the left nostril, then stop your breath for some time, then breathe out through the right nostril and again stop the breath, breathe in through the right nostril, out through the left, and repeat it. This is one full round. You should practise five rounds before meditation. However, breathing in, breathing out and retaining the breath is not that easy. There is a system, a discipline, a method of breathing in and breathing out. Please remember that pranayama is not a breathing exercise. The inhalation and exhalation must have a ratio of one to two. If you are breathing in for five seconds you should breathe out for ten seconds. The ratio between inhalation and retention and exhalation has to be fixed properly, then only will it affect the brain. How to breathe in and what ratio you should maintain should be learnt from your teacher personally.

Bandhas: increasing the voltage

When you retain the breath then you have to do something more. You have to create a pressure at three points in the body. The pressure is intended to create a force, centrifugal force. I hope you know what centripetal and centrifugal force is. This force has to be created by maintaining pressure in three different areas of the body at the time when you are holding the breath. You must contract your throat, the anus and abdominal muscles, and these three contractions should be practised when you are holding the breath. By maintaining contraction in these three different areas, you try to work upon what you call the autonomic nervous system.

When the autonomic nervous system is awakened and becomes active, then both the nostrils flow equally.

You must have noticed that sometimes the right one flows, sometimes the left one flows. That is due to the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems which are controlled by the solar and lunar cycles.

Awakening the autonomic nervous system

When you practise the above pranayama and contract the three different areas in the body, the autonomous nervous system becomes active. Therefore, those who want to meditate must know and realize the right time for meditation. When both nostrils are flowing equally, go ahead.

The right nostril corresponds with the life force; the left nostril represents and corresponds with the mental force. When your left nostril is flowing, if you meditate you will have many psychic visions, forms, imaginations, but no meditation. If you try to meditate when your right nostril is flowing, you won't be able to meditate; your mind will be very active and hyperactive. Therefore, before you start practising meditation you must awaken the autonomic nervous system, it is an absolutely requisite. There are many ways of doing this, but I am not going to tell you all that during this brief lecture.

Supports for meditation

The next point. If you are ready for meditation, that is, both nostrils are flowing equally, what should you do next? Now you need a basis for meditation because the mind needs a base, a support. Without that base, without the support, the mind cannot concentrate on an abstract idea.

According to yoga there are various bases, various supports, for meditation. For example, you can meditate on the mid-eyebrow centre. You can concentrate on the tip of the nose, on the navel centre, on the heart centre, on the centre of the brain, on the back side of the brain, or at the bottom of the spine. You can concentrate on the

natural and spontaneous breath. You can concentrate on an external object like a lamp. It is not necessary for me to tell you how many objects there are on which you can meditate, but to sum up, there are two important methods: one, the sound and two, the form.

The sound is known as mantra, or name. Then comes the form of an object. A flower has a form, the star, the sun, the moon, they have forms. So, name and form, sound and form, are two important methods on which you can start concentration. You can use both or one of them, it doesn't matter. Some people prefer to meditate only on sound, but in my opinion you should use both.

Mantra: the sound

Sound is thought to be a very important tool for success in meditation. Sound means your inner sound. Everyone has a sound; I have a sound, it is my nucleus. That is my personality. You have a sound and this sound is the basis or the nucleus of your consciousness. If you can discover a sound, if you can discover 'your' sound, then meditation can take place immediately. This sound is repeated mentally and when you repeat this sound mentally, your mind attains high frequency.

Sound has its own colour and form. Not the form you use in the letters in the Greek and Roman script. Every sound you produce has a form, but you cannot see that form. Supposing you produce a sound 'ka'. In the Roman script you will write 'ka'. You can write it in Latin, you can write it in Greek, but those are the letters. They are not the forms of sound. The sound 'ka' has a form. What is that form? Is that the form of a lotus or a flower or an animal or an object?

Many scientists and wise men say that every sound has a particular form: of animal, river or flower. Some of these sounds have human forms. Some sounds have half-human and half-animal forms. The upper part is a human

being and the lower part is a fish or a lion or a tiger. You have seen many symbols. That is the form of sound. When you are producing your sound, then it explodes certain visions in your mind.

Inner vision

You know what vision is? Vision means seeing inside. This is also vision; I am seeing you and you are seeing me, but it is external. When you close your eyes and you see, that is called vision. This vision is not imagination, not fantasy, not hallucination. What you see within you, what I call vision, is your own consciousness evolving. Therefore, for your spiritual evolution, it is important that you must explode and must experience these visions. Many wise men, painters, poets, singers have visions, and these visions are not untrue. Many times we have visions and we go to psychologists and they think that it is a mental problem. No, it is not a mental problem. When you meditate and concentrate, when you practise a mantra, the inner forms come from inside your unconscious. Sometimes these visions come from the subconscious mind and sometimes they come from your unconscious. Therefore, when you are practising your sound, when you are practising your mantra, you are trying to accelerate the pace of your evolution.

Yantra: the form

There is another important method of influencing the mind. That is called concentration on yantra. A yantra is geometrical in formation. There are thousands of yantras and these yantras are drawn in a geometrical shape. They are in the form of flowers: sunflower, lotus flower, triangle, hexagon, circle, and so on. The yantras are objects of concentration. When you concentrate on the yantras, they influence your karma. Your karma means the totality of your experience and the totality of your existence. When

you practise concentration on any yantra, that develops a fine picture within your mind. Understand that through the practice of meditation, you are going within yourself. That means from body you go to the mind. From mind you go to emotions and from emotions you go to ego. From ego you go to super-ego and from super-ego you go deep into yourself.

Search for Self

When I say your 'Self' I don't mean this body, because this body is not my Self. This mind is not my Self. Emotion is not my Self. Ego or even super-ego is not my Self. I am different from all these. I am a seer of all these. I see the body; I am not the body. I know the mind; I am not the mind. Likewise, you go to your Self and the purpose of yoga is to help everybody to realize their own Self. Wise people say that those who have known themselves; those who have realized their Selves, those who have known their Selves, are the people who have known everything.

Do you remember what Socrates said? He said, "Know thyself." Did he want you to know the body? If Socrates wanted you to know the body then there was nothing in it because everybody says it. When he said "Know thyself", he meant that Self, not the body, not the mind, not the emotions, not the ego, not even the super-ego, but beyond this.

The Self which I am, what is its form? Is it like an animal or is it like an angel? Is it a voice, or some sort of painting, or some kind of music, or is it like a fire flame or fire sparks? Is it like a divine being with four hands or six hands? What is the nature of my Self? By all experiments, all knowledge and evidence, it is definite that this body is not my Self.

If this body was the Self then it was not necessary for Socrates to say "Know thyself", because everybody

knows it. When he said “Know thyself”, he meant that nobody knows it and nobody knew it. Therefore he was sacrificed, because unwise people do not understand what the Self is. For an Epicurean, for a Hedonist, the body is ultimate. For a sensualist, matter is ultimate, but not for a yogi, or for a wise man.

Today scientists and physicists don't believe that matter is ultimate. This body is matter, it is finite, it will die. It is not ultimate. Beyond matter is energy, beyond energy is consciousness? No, it is not true. Energy is the finer form of matter. Matter can be totally transformed into energy. There is no such thing as matter, matter is the gross form of energy. Therefore, through the practices of yoga you should try to transcend the body, and then through the practices of yoga and meditation you should try to transcend the body idea, mind idea, ego consciousness. Then you can experience your Self in the form of something. Nobody can tell you what the nature of the Self is. The atman can be known by you. If I have known it, I cannot tell you. It cannot be explained, it cannot be exposed, but it can be experienced by you.

When your mind is clouded, when your mind is clumsy, when you are in utter confusion, then the answer will be wrong, but when your mind is cleared and purified by meditation, then you can see your real face in the clean mirror. When the mind is broken, the knowledge is mutilated. True knowledge depends upon purity of mind.

*—Discourse at Town Lecture Hall, Rethimno,
Crete, 25 April 1984*



Interview

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. What is yoga?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga is a practical system of disciplining and correcting the errors in the body and mind. When these errors are corrected, then yoga becomes a way to understand oneself. Yoga has a philosophy, of course, and this philosophy presupposes that there is consciousness and matter in the whole universe. Matter is again divided into two; one division is called matter or substance and the other is called energy. If there is an imbalance between matter and consciousness, then there is imbalance in the body and mind. Therefore, there are four important forms of yoga, each connected with one part of the human personality. Bhakti yoga is connected with human emotions, raja yoga with the human mind, jnana yoga with the human intellect, and karma yoga with the human attachments.

All the problems that we face arise from our attachments, our emotions. Our mind, intellect and personality must be corrected first. Thereby you can experience a happier life, but there are some people who want more than happiness. These people are only a few. For these people there are the higher forms of yoga. For those who want only happiness, there are these four forms of yoga.

If you want a good mind, a good body, good emotions and a good intellect, then this is the lower yoga. If you want to go higher and deeper, then for you there are the higher forms of yoga, known as kundalini yoga and kriya yoga. By practising those yogas you can go deep into meditation, you can transcend the body idea, the mind idea and all ideas. Therefore, yoga has a definite role to

fulfil. For most people yoga is a way to happiness through discipline, not erratic or sensual happiness, and for a few people it means the knowledge of higher reality.

In yoga, everything is practical. We do not insist on philosophy, theory and doctrine. Yoga, in this sense, is purely individualistic. I do not know much about politics, economics and socialism because I have lived as a swami from the age of nineteen and I am completely out of touch. I think that yoga is a purely individual discipline, but one thing is certain. When you are fixed in yoga then your needs are minimized. This means you can survive with the minimum.

Q. Is there a particular form of breathing for high blood pressure?

Paramahamsaji: There are many forms of breathing and every form is important for the individual according to his peculiarities. Some forms of breathing are good for low blood pressure and some are good for high blood pressure. Some breathing practices, or pranayama, are good for the heart, some for the lungs, and some for concentration of mind or controlling the mind. There are about eight forms of breathing and these are all different to suit individual needs.

Every pranayama has different rules. Some pranayamas are abdominal, some are diaphragmatic and some have nothing to do with any of these. For high blood pressure there are four types of pranayama: sheetali, sheetkari, ujjayi and bhrumari. It is necessary to adjust the blood pressure, as when we sit for meditation, if the blood pressure is high or low, it will influence our experience.

Q. How can we know the Self?

Paramahamsaji: The Self has to be known step by step, not all at once. If you want to experience the Self, then the first thing you must know is how to shut the mind

for some time. You should be able to see within yourself; within the mind.

Q. What are psychic experiences?

Paramahamsaji: They are directions from higher nature. They come from your higher mind and whenever they come, you must follow them. You should not expect them, you should not wish for them. You should just accept them when they come, that's all. If you want to develop them then you should practise tantric meditation. Tantric meditation means meditation on yantra, or on the flame of a candle, or meditating on a crystal ball. Then you will know more.

Q. How can we know when meditation has been successful?

Paramahamsaji: When concentration becomes successful you begin to see visions, that is, colours or forms or anything internally. This is the first symptom of growing concentration. The best point of concentration is the eyebrow centre, but many people find it difficult to concentrate on this point, so they should first concentrate on the flame of a candle placed in front of them, then close the eyes and concentrate on the reflected image. This is the practice of *trataka*. If you want to concentrate on the eyebrow centre directly, you might experience a little strain.

Q. How can we deal with stress?

Paramahamsaji: In order to cope with anxiety and stress one has to develop the strength of the nervous system. This is one way. However, sometimes the causes of anxiety and stress are not as serious as we think. After all, what causes you anxiety may not cause me as much anxiety. Therefore, the second method is to try to understand the

exact level of anxiety, not the imaginary and exaggerated level. The third method is to try and relax immediately when anxiety enters the mind.

In order to improve the strength of the nervous system we should practise hatha yoga. To know the exact level of anxiety we should practise a little bit of concentration, and to relax temporarily, then and there, we should learn the practice of yoga nidra.

Q. How can we recognize our guru?

Paramahamsaji: It is necessary that one should do some yoga practices even without a guru. Practise with some teacher for a few months or a year. After learning some practices from someone who is not necessarily your guru, you will have a practical and personal understanding, because yoga purifies the mind and the intellect. Then, when you meet your guru, you will recognize him at once.

At this moment you are spiritually blind. Even if your guru were standing in front of you, you couldn't see him, just like a blind man cannot see the sun, the fire or the flower. In order to see the sun, fire, flower, or anything, you have to open your eyes. In the same way, a seeker is a blind person, ignorant. If he does a few practices without a guru, he opens his eyes. At that time, if a guru comes to him he will recognize him at once.

According to my personal experience, when you are in front of your guru and your eyes are open, you don't even think about it, you don't even doubt. There is no question of whether or not he is your guru. The mind becomes quiet. You are as if hypnotized, as if your mind is under control. Therefore, in order to find a guru you must do some sadhana with a teacher, go to satsang and hear the discourses, read the books and meet good people, then you will be ready.

Q. The swamis who come to the West talk about God. Why is it that you do not?

Paramahamsaji: I only teach yoga. I don't teach a religion, therefore I don't talk about God or great souls. No, I don't go that far. I only teach that to those who are very close to me. I don't teach religion to the public,

only yoga. I stop there. I don't talk about God to them. If you were very close to me, maybe then I could talk about God, otherwise I keep quiet because religion is your business, not mine.

Many people say to me that all the swamis who come to the West talk about God and the soul, but I only talk about yoga, so I have to give an explanation. You see,



my disciples come from various religions. Some of them are atheists or communists and some are Muslims. It is necessary that I do not offend them because they are all my disciples. One may believe in Jehovah, another in Rama, Krishna, or Christ. It's okay, let them do it. That is their way, but I think that if the foundation is not strong then the superstructure will fall.

Q. What is an aura?

Paramahansa ji: Around the body there is body magnetism. It is called an 'aura'. It depends on one's thoughts and emotions, and changes in most people from time to time. Now you are happy, now you are unhappy, now you are depressed, now you are jubilant, accordingly the aura changes from time to time. Sometimes it is large, sometimes it is small.

Everybody has an aura and it becomes more prominent in those who practise meditation. Some call it aura, others magnetism, and others the light of the spirit. They have various names for it. When you concentrate on a person you can see their aura. You can see anyone's aura, it doesn't take long. If you concentrate on someone for fifteen minutes you can get it. It is not a very difficult thing to do and it doesn't help you much because the aura changes. In most people the aura changes, so naturally you do not know exactly what their personality is. Sometimes, if you are having spiritual thoughts your aura is different, but in the afternoon you may be depressed and the aura will change again.

Not only human beings, but every object has an aura or outline. A stone, mineral, a leaf, goat, buffalo, cow, horse or pig, every object has an aura. It is a field, just like you have electromagnetic fields, every object has a field and that field can be increased. Suppose there is a stone

around which there is a field. If you concentrate on that stone, the field will increase. A picture or a statue also has an aura around it.

In yoga we call this the subtle body. What you see is one body, the physical body, but besides this there are many bodies: the pranic body, the mental body, the psychic body, the emotional body and the unconscious body. There are ten bodies enshrined in this physical body and they are known as fields. You can see this physical body but not the other nine, because they are in the form of vibrations, and these vibrations are all different from each other. When you talk about the aura, you are using a very general term. You have seen pictures of great saints; they have a golden aura about them which represents illumination. So there are various types of aura which everybody has and can know.

Your aura may be touching the aura of someone else. You will feel that physically you are separate, but your auras will be touching. You can increase or decrease the aura. When you shut your mind, when you close your mind during meditation and think of only one thing, not two things, then the aura, the pranic or spiritual aura increases. It becomes huge. When you are not meditating and your mind is restless and excited, the aura shrinks and becomes small. It is not imagination, it is real. It is an experience which can come to you when your mind is one-pointed for some time.

Sometimes an object can develop an inner experience for you, but not every object. For everyone there is one object called a symbol. When you concentrate on that object you get an experience immediately for a short time. Everybody has a different symbol. If one person concentrates on light they may not get any experience, but you may get it. In order to develop an experience you need an exact symbol which you must be drawn to.

This experience comes from the unconscious mind, deep inside.

You should have more and more experiences. These experiences may not have any meaning, but in the course of time they will help you spiritually. Please remember that no experience is imaginary, every experience comes from inside. There is no such thing as imagination; it is real in the sense that it is coming from you. Only you can have this experience, and no one else. When you are concentrating on your symbol you will get many experiences. It can be anything. Sometimes it is very pleasant, sometimes it is very unpleasant, both of these feelings are all right.

You should not try to interpret or give a meaning to these experiences because they come from very, very far off. You see, in spiritual life there are many questions that come into the mind and you cannot get an answer intellectually. Nor will I give you the true answer. If I give you the correct answer you will not understand it, so I have to answer according to your reach of mind. If a child of three asks me about the moon, what do I tell him? I will not tell him that the moon is a planet and that there is no oxygen there, for he would not understand that. I will explain according to his understanding. You have to understand that true knowledge cannot be given; you must realize it for yourself. You have to start practising something; that is important. Don't practise much, just a little. Not two or three hours but just ten minutes or fifteen minutes, that's all. Start your practice from grass-roots level: first hatha yoga, then raja yoga, then kriya yoga, then kundalini yoga. Go like that, step by step.

—Hotel Doma, Hania, Crete, 25 April 1984

Experiencing the Self

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

There was a wise man in Greece many hundreds of years ago who used to tell his fellow men that they should know their own Self. His famous dictum was “Know thyself”. He created a great revolution in thought and philosophy in this country, but even before that, in India, there existed a philosophy and a doctrine saying the same thing.

Long before Socrates was born there was a system, a philosophy and discipline known as yoga. Religious people everywhere believe in one reality but the philosophy of yoga believes in two realities. Therefore it is known as a dualistic philosophy, not a monistic philosophy. The philosophy of yoga says that consciousness and nature are the two eternal realities. A combination and interaction between consciousness and matter produces what we call creation. Even in each and every particle of matter, in each and every object, in each and every thing that you see, there is a combination of consciousness and matter.

Transcendental experience

When matter becomes gross then we become gross because creation is a process of manifestation of matter. Each and everybody, each and every individual, must try to return from matter, from nature, to consciousness. We know matter and we don't know the Self. We talk about God but we don't know. We talk about higher transcendental things but we don't know. Talking about transcendental matters is one thing, understanding,

experiencing and knowing transcendental matters is a completely different thing. When we know matter we know creation, but what about the thing within us?

We know only those things which are visible and which are gross, but do you believe or do you think that what you see is everything? Is there nothing beyond this gross and visible matter? Is body ultimate? Is body your definition? Are you the body or something different from the body? Are you the mind or something different from the mind? Are you the senses and emotions or are you the seer of those? If you are the body, then Socrates was a fool. If you are the body, the mind and the senses and nothing beyond this, then not only Socrates, but all the great sages and wise men were fools, but I think we are not wiser than they were.



Yoga is an attempt, an effort, to search for the reality behind the appearance. There are two distinct events in creation. One is called reality and the other is called appearance. This body is appearance. Your external form is an appearance. Matter is an appearance, but what is reality? This reality is something which one has to know. This reality is not an intellectual philosophy. This reality is not what is written in the books. This reality is a matter of your personal experience, therefore yoga tries to serve this reality. In order to experience and understand this reality you will have to go into yourself.

When you go out you see creation. When you go out you experience the sense objects, you see the forms, you hear the sounds. You have many external experiences, you see the diversity. In outer experience there is no experience of unity. If one is trying to experience unity in this external world, one will not succeed. This is precisely the reason why everybody is unhappy.

The search for happiness

We are unhappy, not because we have no money, not because somebody is dead in our family, not because something has gone wrong. We are unhappy because we are searching for happiness in diversity. We are unhappy because we are searching for happiness when it is not there. Now try to think, try to think quietly, try to think of one thing quietly within your mind. In your everyday life you are searching for happiness, and where are you searching for happiness? You search for happiness from external objects. You expect happiness from your children, from your friends, from your family, but do you get it? No. Maybe you get it for some time, or maybe you get not happiness, but unhappiness. Why is it like this?

Do you think that all the things of this world are real? No, we have made a fundamental error. We have not

tried to understand who experiences happiness and who experiences unhappiness. You experience happiness, you experience unhappiness, not from the object but from the mind. If your mind is sick, then no object can give you happiness. If you are abnormal mentally, if you are sick mentally, nothing in this world can give you happiness. Therefore, the fundamental philosophy of happiness is a healthy mind.

This is the basic concept of yoga. If you have a healthy body then you can experience happiness from food and from everything. If you have healthy, normal emotions and a balanced mind you can experience happiness and love from everybody. If your emotions are imbalanced, if you are emotionally down and broken, then your beautiful children, your good wife, your good husband, your good business, nothing can give you happiness. Please understand.

The same thing can be said about the mind. The mind is full of tensions. This body is full of tensions. With a tense body, with a tense mind, with tense emotions, you are trying to experience happiness, and you don't get it, or even if you do get it, it is only for a short time. You experience happiness for a short time, then happiness finishes, dies. With a tense body and tense emotions you pray, but nothing happens. When your body, mind and emotions are tense, your love is confused. Therefore, you try to escape. You try to escape from these tensions, but then the problem is how to make the mind healthy. Where is the way and which is the way?

No religion in the world has shown the way to a healthy mind, healthy body and healthy emotions. For thousands of years only one philosophy has helped mankind and that philosophy is yoga. What is yoga? What does yoga do to us, and if I practise yoga what do I get? The answer is self-evident: a healthy body without tension, a peaceful

mind without tension, and pure emotion without tension. Therefore, I am talking to you about yoga.

Branches of yoga

Yoga is a general term, just as you say 'education'. What is education? Geometry, algebra, physics, history, geography, chemistry, biology, economics, commerce, all these are education. In the same way, there are many branches and faculties in yoga. One type of yoga takes care of the body, purifies the body, disciplines the body. Another type of yoga takes care of the mind, purifies the mind, disciplines the mind and corrects it. The third type of yoga purifies



the emotions, directs the emotions and disciplines the emotions. The fourth type of yoga corrects your personality, improves the quality of your personality and gives it proper balance. Another type of yoga purifies the intellect and understanding. Like this, there are many branches of yoga.

These branches of yoga are known as karma yoga, hatha yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga, bhakti yoga, kriya yoga, laya yoga, kundalini yoga, nada yoga and mantra yoga. These are the divisions of the yogic science. I will not be able to tell you here which particular yoga you should practise because yoga should be learnt from an expert teacher. I am just giving you a glimpse of yogic science and nothing more.

There are two objectives before yoga, which depend upon the desire of the people. There is a large group of people who want happiness and health, and there is a small group of people who don't care for happiness, who don't care for health, who only care for the deeper inner experience. Therefore, according to the desire of the person, yoga should be learnt and yoga should be taught.

The search for inner experience

When Socrates said "Know thyself", he was trying to indicate the inner experience. Many people did not understand him during his own time because the spiritually-minded people who sincerely want to have that transcendental experience and who want to experience the deeper consciousness are very few. The practices of kundalini yoga and kriya yoga are meant for these people. However, there are millions of people throughout the world who do not care for these deeper and intimate experiences. They want a life free from distress, tensions and problems.

The need for self-discipline

There are two objectives which yoga has to fulfil in our lives, but whichever our objective, one thing is common

to both. Whether you want happiness, health, or inner experience, you must have a disciplined mind. You must have a disciplined mind because without it you cannot achieve anything in this world or in the inner world.

You discipline or train a wild horse, you discipline and train a wild dog; in the same way you have to discipline and train your mind. You can imagine what a wild horse can do, and you can't use it at all. In the same way, humanity today is functioning without a disciplined mind. Whether it is a nation, a society or a family, most people or almost all people, have no discipline and no restraint over their minds. A disciplined mind functions within proper quotas and it is not for me to explain and prove the necessity of discipline to all of you.

You are sitting here in a disciplined way and I am talking to you, but if you become undisciplined now, what can I do? I cannot speak and you cannot listen. However, there are many forms of discipline. Some forms are involuntary; they are imposed disciplines like socialism. It is imposed; it is not spontaneous, natural, voluntary. There is military discipline, religious discipline, family discipline, but these various forms of discipline are just external, like a drill, physical training. Yoga talks about individual, voluntary discipline and this discipline is not only mental discipline but integral discipline, including the body, mind, emotions and ego. However, the first discipline is for the body.

Hatha yoga: balance of forces

The yogic science of body discipline is known as hatha yoga. It is the preliminary and basic discipline which every person who wants to practise yoga should learn, but then for hatha yoga, this body is not the only body. This body, as you think of it, is bone, blood, marrow and muscles, but yoga says it is more than that. In this physical body there



are two forces, just like the forces in an electricity cable, and these forces in the body are material and objective. One force is called prana, the life force, the other force is called the mind. If there is an imbalance between these two forces, then you have problems.

There are two types of diseases in the physical body. Yoga calls them psychosomatic diseases and somatopsychic diseases. When the disease is born in the physical body and transferred to the mind it is called somatopsychic; when it is born in the mind and transferred to the body it is called psychosomatic. Therefore, we should not say

that all diseases are mental. Some diseases are mental or psychic in origin but even so, they are transferable.

If you have been suffering from a mental problem for one or two or three years, that problem is transferred to the physical body after some time in the form of physical symptoms. If you have been suffering from physical disease for one, two or three years, then the disease is transferred to the mental body in the form of mental symptoms. Therefore, in hatha yoga every disease is analyzed in two different ways. Supposing a person is suffering from peptic ulcer or maybe from high blood pressure or from a respiratory problem, the hatha yoga science tries to relate this disease to the mind and body at the same time, because we believe that the imbalance between the pranic and mental forces is responsible for this.

Flows of energy

Within the framework of your spine there are two important nerve flows, one on the left and one on the right, which carry two types of energy from the bottom to the top. The two forms of energy are not philosophical; they are actual, they are tangible, they are clear and they can be measured by the most sophisticated scientific instruments.

These two flows are connected to the two nostrils, to the right and left hemispheres of the brain and the six centres of the body within the spine. One centre is at the top of the spine, another is in the neck, the third behind the heart, the fourth behind the navel, the fifth in the sacrum and the sixth in the coccyx or the area of the perineum. From these six junctions or centres the two energies going to the left and right are distributed throughout the entire body by thousands of nerve channels. These two forces

are known in yoga as ida and pingala. The ancient people called them sun and moon, modern science names them sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems and they are also known as prana and the mind. When you practise hatha yoga, these two forces are balanced.

Hatha yoga practices

I am not going to explain to you what hatha yoga is because your teacher can tell you that, but it is a practice in which you do asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha and six methods of purification of the body. Asana means 'posture', posture of a cobra, a peacock, a fish, a lion, a locust, a camel, a bow. There are eighty-four major postures. According to classical yoga there are eight point four million postures, as many postures as there are species. However, it is not necessary for you to learn and practise eight point four million postures, because you have already practised them.

Then comes pranayama. Pranayama is connected with the breath in the two nostrils; the left nostril is connected with the right hemisphere of the brain and the right nostril is connected with the left hemisphere. When you breathe in or when you breathe out, you are working on the brain, the lungs and the heart. Pranayama primarily improves the body on all levels: the brain, the lungs, it trains the heart and stabilizes the nervous system. These are the important effects of pranayama on the physical body.

Effects of hatha yoga on the endocrine and nervous systems

Asana corrects the flow of endocrine secretions in the body. You have a thyroid gland, the pancreas and many other glands in the physical body. These glands sometimes behave in an erratic way. Due to our eating



habits, lifestyle, and so many reasons, the endocrine glands do not function in a healthy way. The endocrine glands are controlled either by the sympathetic or the parasympathetic nervous system.

When there is something wrong with the system, then you have problems with the endocrine secretions. For example, in diabetes the pancreas does not function. It does not produce insulin, therefore one has diabetes. But why does the pancreas stop functioning? Is it dead? No. The pancreas is controlled by the parasympathetic nervous system. When you are under constant stress and distress in life, then gradually the sympathetic nervous system gets blocked.

Constant stress after some time becomes distress. First there is a problem, maybe within the family, with the business or with your own mind. This problem becomes anxiety. This constant anxiety becomes high anxiety, then this becomes stress, which finally becomes distress. You become restless and this destroys the sympathetic nervous system and the pancreas stops functioning.

In modern science and in yogic science there is no contradiction. If you want to rejuvenate the pancreas, then you will have to resurrect the sympathetic nervous system. Therefore people suffering from diabetes nowadays practise yoga and get better.

Raja yoga

Asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha and the six systems of purification of the body are known as hatha yoga. There are many forms of yoga and it will not be possible for me to speak about them in one speech tonight, but before I close my speech I will talk to you about raja yoga, the yoga of the mind, the yoga of total mind, the yoga of the external mind, the yoga of the middle mind, and the yoga of the deeper mind. What is raja yoga? It is a yoga which

concerns your thoughts, your feelings and your deeper nature, and this is the most systematic yoga.

Raja yoga talks about concentration, meditation and the experience of unity. I think if hatha yoga is practised in combination with raja yoga, we will be able to handle the problems of our life. Hatha yoga is trying to control, discipline and correct the forces in the body; raja yoga is trying to discipline and control the forces in the mind. The mind is a combination of twenty-six elements. The mind is not homogeneous, it is a combination of many heterogeneous elements. Therefore, when you want to control the mind, you must know how to do it. You should not suppress the mind. If you suppress the mind there will be repression. Religions teach suppression, social discipline teaches us suppression, therefore you find repression in society, but in yoga you should practise meditation or dhyana yoga.

You should close your eyes for ten minutes, make your body stable, keep your spine upright and straight, and you must concentrate on one point, one object, one thing, for ten minutes. This is the beginning of raja yoga. Raja yoga is much more than this, but you have to start practising somewhere. If you can, practise the lotus posture. If you can't, practise siddhasana or if you can't practise that, practise hatha yoga. In a few months you will be able to sit properly, spine upright and straight but not tense, because the spine is a very important part of your body in yoga.

Later you will learn that within the spine there are important nerve flows. The spine is not merely an assembly of vertebrae, there are very fine nerve flows in the spine and these nerves control your thought, your mind, your feelings, and so many things. These nerves in the spine flow from the bottom to the top in an ascending fashion, not in a descending fashion. All this you will study and learn from yoga books.

You should also learn how to fix the inner gaze. When you close your eyes, where do you see, where do you look, where do you fix your eyes? In yoga, there are many centres. The most important centre is in the middle of the eyebrows. Another important centre is at the tip of the nose. The third important centre is the centre of the heart. The fourth important centre is inside the brain. Another important centre is in the backside of the brain on the top of the spine. Another important centre is in between the urinary and excretory systems, near the coccyx.

You have to fix your mind on one centre, on one point, for ten minutes. During these ten minutes you must try to experience inner peace. You must decide, "For ten minutes I am not going to move my body, not going to open my eyes, not going to think of this or that. I will just think of one thing." This is the beginning of raja yoga. Practise hatha yoga and raja yoga. The practice of hatha yoga takes about fifteen minutes to begin with. Whether you are healthy or not, hatha yoga is a must if you want to practise raja yoga.

Guru yoga

After you have practised hatha yoga and you are starting raja yoga, then there is an important transition. You can learn hatha yoga and raja yoga from your teacher, but after hatha yoga and after the starting point of raja yoga, you will have to decide if you want to go further. Some people don't want to go further. They say, "Oh, I practise hatha yoga, raja yoga; good body, good mind, okay, nothing more." However, there are people who are not satisfied with this. They want to go further. They want to know more. They want to experience more and more. At that time you must go and search for a guru for yourself, not only a teacher.

There is a difference between a guru and a teacher. A teacher is a knower of the science, a teacher is an expert

of the science, but a guru is a person who has experienced the invisible in himself. One who has known the Self, as indicated by Socrates, is a guru. At this point, when you have started raja yoga and your mind becomes keener to know and experience more, then first you must have guru yoga. I call it 'guru yoga'. He will decide what you should practise. He will tell you how to practise, because it is important that man is not born just to die.

Death cannot be man's destiny. It is illogical. If death is the end of everything it is unphilosophical. Death is just a process of metamorphosis. The milk changes and curd is born. The curd changes and butter is born. The butter is broken and fat is born. Matter breaks and energy is born. Energy breaks and knowledge is born. Therefore death is not the last thing in life. Death is just one event in life and life is eternal. This present life of ours is a link in a long chain. This is the fundamental philosophical truth which everybody has to understand.

Happiness comes and goes. Friends come and go, prosperity comes and goes. Youth also comes and goes; it is not eternal. Childhood is not eternal. Youth is not eternal. There is only one thing which is eternal, the Self, the Atman. But what is that? What is it? That is why, many hundreds of years ago, a great wise man, a great saint said, "Know thyself." Greek people remember that great wise man as Socrates, but they have failed to follow him. They know him through Plato's dialogues, that's all. I have come to remind you.

—Discourse at Atlantis Hotel, Iraklio,
Crete, 26 April 1984



Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. Paramahamsaji, can you say that yoga is a system of discipline in all aspects of life?

Paramahamsaji: Starting with the individual; the individual is the centre. In other systems society is the centre and the individual is at the periphery. Yoga is, in my opinion, the only science of individual discipline. It is what we call voluntary discipline and there is no doubt that voluntary discipline is by all means superior to other forms of discipline, such as political discipline, military discipline, religious discipline and police discipline. A nation becomes great through individual discipline.

Many thousands of years ago Socrates said, "Know thyself." After these thousands of years I am also repeating the same thing. I have read Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, everybody; I have read all the dialogues of Plato. You see, Greek mythology and Hindu mythology are similar. In Greek mythology, Homer has also included the classic of the Ramayana. The great king Rama, his wife Sita, they are part of Greek mythology. Greek mythology has so many references to Indian classics, especially the concept of Surya, the sun god with the horses. The concept of Saraswati, the goddess of learning, is the same and the concept of Cupid or Kamadeva is the same.

Also, the significance or importance of tulsi, the basil plant. The Greek people have a great respect for basil. In the Hindu religion tulsi is the highest and greatest. You can always identify a Hindu home by seeing basil, a tulsi plant, in front of the house.

There is another important thing. After Alexander the Great, his general, Seleucus, came to India, and his sister, or daughter Helena, was married to the king of Pataliputra, Patna, called Chandragupta. Many Greeks and Indians married each other after that. There is a tribe in India that has Greek features: you know, the bulging eyes, the long nose. For many hundreds of years India and Greece had diplomatic relationships. The first ambassador of Greece to India was Megasthenes. He has written many diaries about his visit. You can see them in your museum.

Another strikingly similar feature between the Hindus and Greeks is the polytheistic religion. Before the advent of Christianity, Greece was polytheistic. The sun god, Saraswati, Aphrodite, so many gods they had! The Hindus are also polytheistic; they have a god for everything.

Q. Socrates said that God is one.

Paramahamsaji: Yes, God is one. God is one but that One is an infinite One. It is not this one; the infinite One. He has many forms: fire, water, ether, everything is His form.

It was mentioned yesterday that people are searching for happiness in places where they won't find happiness. However, a person with an economic problem, how can that person start concerning himself with himself if he has to support his family?

Happiness and unhappiness have nothing to do with poverty or prosperity. The people who are very prosperous in Europe and America are more unhappy than poor people in this country. If you study the statistics in Europe and America you will find that there are more mental cases, more crimes and more suicides in those countries. India is a very poor country, but if you study the statistics there are less crimes, less mental cases and less suicides, because we have a philosophy. The Greek people have a philosophy. Americans have no philosophy.

Q. Could you replace the word philosophy with religion?

Paramahamsaji: No, religion is something else. Religion is a belief. Philosophy is an investigation; sophia means 'knowledge of inner being', not of outside. So, philosophy means the science of the knowledge of yourself, and in philosophy there is always investigation. Philosophy is open-minded. You may find new things again and again. Religion is closed. There is no investigation; there is faith. What is said in the book is final. There is no place for the intellect in religion; philosophy is primarily intellectual. In religion there is no rationalism; in philosophy there is only rationalism and no faith, therefore religion cannot represent philosophy.

Q. How do you feel regarding your contact with the people of Crete and the nature of these people?

Paramahamsaji: I have read a lot about Crete in history. When I was told that I was going to have my program in Crete I was more than happy. Many things here remind me of Indian towns and I would like to come here again and again, not only for yoga but to know the people and the country because I believe that this island has immense potential for the growth of yoga.

I will ask your leaders to think about the yogic movement on this island. They should invite me as many times as they can. I have my centre in Athens and they can always invite me and I will come.

Q. Does the science of yoga mean tremendous discipline, to discipline the mind, the body and the whole self?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga is primarily a science of disciplining the body, mind, emotion and intellect.

Q. Could psychoanalysis supplement yoga in that case?

Paramahamsaji: No, because in yoga and in psychoanalysis the fundamental definition of the mind is different. In

yoga they say that the inner self is pure, it is luminous, it is sinless. In psychoanalysis the mind is a bundle of abnormal behaviour: schizophrenia, narcissism, guilt, all such things are the qualities of the mind in psychoanalysis. That means that in psychoanalysis they say that in this gutter there is only dirty water, so clean it. In yoga they say no, in this gutter there is only pure water, you just remove the dirt.

Yoga believes in the grandeur of the human being or the human mind. Yoga believes that mind is omniscient,

omnipotent and omnipresent. It can become supermind. In psychoanalysis they don't believe anything like this. They only talk about mental problems.

The philosophy of psychoanalysis is mainly based on Freudian psychology and there is, of course, a great influence from Carl Jung on modern psychology. It is because Carl Jung was greatly influenced by yogic philosophy that he has made mention in his writings of the inner disciplinary role of yoga.

Q. What is yoga, suggestion or auto-suggestion?

Paramahansaji: The practice of yoga ranges from body to mind, emotion and intellect. In hatha yoga they balance the energies in the body. In bhakti yoga they try to fix the emotional balance. In jnana yoga they try to investigate the real nature of the Self. In raja yoga they analyze the mind in detail. In karma yoga they try to understand the day-to-day problems of human life and try to fix them. In



kundalini yoga they try to awaken the sleeping centres in the brain. Therefore yoga is not a 'suggestive science'.

Q. What is the role of the guru and why must a disciple contact a guru after a certain stage?

Paramahansaji: The role of guru is to realize the karma of his disciple, to realize the total destiny of the disciple. According to that, he will suggest to him what to do. That is the main role of a guru in the life of a disciple. Just as a jeweller analyzes the jewels in detail, similarly the guru analyzes the total destiny, nature and quality of the disciple. Before I teach what you have to do, I have to find out the level of your evolution and I will also have to find out what your limitations are. I have to find out to which degree you are attached to worldly things and to which degree you can transcend them.

Then a disciple allows the guru to handle his ego. If you allow me to handle your ego, then I can tell you what to do, because ego is very hard stuff. That is the basis of your individuality; it is because of your ego that you are different from me. If you remove your ego, then there is no difference, we are one.

Sometimes in an individual there are two egos. If you have two egos then you will find difficulty in adjusting with yourself. In the same way, I have an ego and you have an ego, therefore we are two and not one. A disciple withdraws his ego and then the guru can understand him.

Without removing the ego it is not possible for guru to understand the disciple. Ego is like a hard shell and if I want to penetrate into you I can't because you are closed, therefore for spiritual life, the guru and disciple relationship is not only most important, it is the only important thing.

—Rethymno and Iraklio, Crete, 27 April 1984



The Revival of the Science of Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

I have wanted to discover what the future of yoga is in the world and this has led me even to the countries behind the iron curtain. Scientists, thinkers and men of education are concerned about the situation in the world, especially with the people, and they have come to the conclusion that the science of yoga will benefit humanity immensely.

Yoga is neither a religion nor a sect. It is not based on beliefs or dogmas. It is a science which is intimately connected with human health and state of mind. Of course, there is another side of yoga which is connected with the mental powers of man, but most people believe and think that yoga is a way to health and mental happiness.

The healing aspect

A lot of scientific investigations have been done by the men of science, particularly doctors, and they have found that the practice of yoga is a wonderful system for health and also for therapy. Throughout the world many thousands of yoga schools have sprung up and are dedicated to the treatment of chronic illness. In European countries, there are about 72,000 registered yoga teachers, and people go to those yoga schools in order to recoup their health. In the United Kingdom, yoga is being taught to patients suffering from multiple sclerosis and they have improved. As a result, institutions have now started yoga therapy in a regular fashion.

The scientific studies on yoga have revealed that yoga can successfully treat many chronic and hitherto incurable



diseases like rheumatism, sciatica and asthma. In the beginning people were sceptical; it was difficult to believe that yoga could cure all these illnesses when the sophisticated and highly advanced medical science had failed.

Now the medical people do believe that in yoga there is a cure and they confess that in their own system

there is no cure but just relief. If someone is suffering from high blood pressure and undergoes medication, he just gets relief. That's not a cure; he is going to get it again. However, the system of yoga reaches what we call the esoteric systems of the body, and not just the exoteric systems.

This body has two systems, esoteric and exoteric. The exoteric is that which we study in modern science: anatomy and physiology. In the esoteric system, yoga talks about two forces in the physical body. These two forces are in the form of energy flows and these two forces control each and every organ and each and every particle of this body. One system controls the mental functions and the other controls the life functions. They both must be in total harmony, because when there is imbalance between these mental and life forces, then there is disease in the physical body.

Psychosomatic and somatopsychic

The two forms of disease resulting on account of imbalance between these mental and life forces are either somatic or psychic.

For example, when the life force becomes weak, then you have somatic diseases, when the mental force becomes weak, then you have psychic diseases. Psychic disease, in the course of time, becomes somatic as well. In the same way, a somatic disease, in the course of time, becomes psychic. For example, if one is suffering from asthma for one, two or three years, it affects one's mind and becomes a psychic problem. If one is suffering from anxiety or stress, in the course of a few years it will develop into ulcer, tumour, cancer, and so on.

Distribution of energy in the body

Within the framework of the spine you have two important nadis, channels, flowing from the bottom to the top. These two nadis carry two types of forces. One is responsible for all your mental activities: thinking, reasoning, etc., the other carries the life function which is responsible for your physical activities. These two forces are situated on the left and right side of the spine and within the spine there are six junctions or six centres. These six centres are

situated: first in the coccyx, second in the sacral region, third in the solar plexus, fourth in the cardiac plexus, fifth in the cervical plexus, and sixth in the medulla oblongata. Through these junctions, these twofold forces or energies are distributed throughout the body.

In the physical body, more than 1,30,000 channels or nadis distribute this energy to every part. Out of these 72,000 channels are situated just in the heart centre, in the cardiac region. When there is a block of energy in a particular part of the body, then sickness develops.

Hatha yoga

The science of hatha yoga has become very popular throughout Europe and the western world. It is comprised of yoga postures, breathing and six processes of purifying the physical body, the exoteric body.

First, the external body of nerves, blood, mucus, etc. must be purified. Then there are certain postures known as yoga asanas. They are not exercises, they are positions or postures, such as the cobra posture, the peacock posture and the fish posture. These postures relate to many animals and by assuming these postures, you are able to create a balance or harmony in these two forces.

Second, pranayama or breathing practice. The breathing practice is connected with the lungs, heart, nervous system and brain. There are different forms of breathing in yoga. They are not only intended for oxygenation of the body, because in hatha yoga they say that the two nostrils are directly connected with the two hemispheres of the brain, the lungs, the heart and both nervous systems.

It is not only so with pranayama. Even your normal breathing which you do every day is related not only with the lungs, but with the heart, nervous system and brain at the same time. When the breathing is not correct,

then diseases connected or related with their functions originate. Therefore in hatha yoga, or in yoga, the practice of pranayama is applauded very much. Hatha yoga is the basis of all other forms of yoga.

Raja yoga

There is another form of yoga which is becoming popular in America and other parts of the world. In fact, many thinkers come to India in order to learn that yoga, because teachers of hatha yoga are available everywhere in the world, but the system of raja yoga is related to the human mind and the human consciousness. The people of our times have found that mind and consciousness play a leading role in man's life concerning his feelings and experiences.

Nowadays people, especially doctors, talk about the diseases born of stress. Formerly they used to talk about diseases due to bacteria, viruses and other infections, but now they have come to the conclusion that diseases are born of stress, and stress is a condition of the mind, of consciousness and human thinking. It is an erroneous way of thinking that gradually develops stress in the course of time, in the course of a few years.

When you are young you don't feel it because you have a strong nervous system, a young brain and a young body. However, as you grow older you begin to feel the stress, your body begins to feel the stress. As a result of this stress there are many diseases. Almost eighty-nine percent of all diseases are considered to be born of stress. Migraine can be born of stress. Not only migraine but also many serious diseases such as high blood pressure or cardiovascular diseases, even high fever, hysteria, epilepsy, schizophrenia. There is no end to the list of sicknesses born of stress.

What is the way of getting rid of stress? First there is tension, then there is stress, and when this stress is

continued it gains momentum and there comes a moment when stress becomes distress. You are completely down; it's called a nervous breakdown. They have found that the science of raja yoga can successfully check that stress.

Taming the mind

Raja yoga is a very ancient science. The ancient text of raja yoga says that you should and must learn to control the fluctuations of the mind by constant practice. The mind is wild because it is not trained. Social training, cultural training, religious training, academic training is not a training of the mind. Mental training is internal discipline; it is your own discipline. When an undesirable thought comes in your mind and you don't want it, can you stop it? No, we can't stop it, most of us cannot, and as a result of that thought we have a lot of mental suffering. This proves that we do not have control over the functions and activities of our mind, therefore we suffer from stress and tensions.

In raja yoga you have the science of meditation. This science deals with one-pointedness of mind and concentration. When you try to concentrate your mind for a few minutes, at once the waves in the brain change. You try to concentrate for a few minutes and ask your doctor to take your blood pressure. In five minutes it will drop and not only the blood pressure but the brainwaves will also change.

This science of meditation is a very important science for the growth and discipline of your body and mind at the same time, but how to meditate is a very difficult question. Just closing your eyes and fighting with your mind does not develop meditation. There are various ways of practising meditation and these methods must be learnt from a teacher because raja yoga is a science which relates to the mind, its growth and evolution.

Questions and Answers

Q. Could you tell us what is the meaning of yoga?

Paramahamsaji: I think I have already spoken about it, but I will tell you again. The literal meaning of yoga is union, harmony, balance and concord. This means harmony and concord between the body and the mind.

Q. How can we achieve it?

Paramahamsaji: By certain practices relating to the body and mind. There are certain forms of yoga which I explained just now. Hatha yoga is the science of the esoteric and exoteric bodies. Raja yoga is the science which deals with practices for the mind. Bhakti yoga is the science which deals with practices for balancing the emotions. Karma yoga gives practices for the total personality of man. Mantra yoga is the practice for developing concentration and meditation. Yoga nidra is a practice for relaxing the body and nervous system. Kriya yoga is a practice for those people who want to go high in the path of spiritual experience.

In this way, there are other forms of yoga which are only for those who want to go into the practice of higher yoga. Those practices are known as the practices of kundalini yoga. Those who want physical health and mental peace or emotional peace or mental health should practise the lower forms of yoga. According to the system, one must practise yoga gradually, but there can be some exceptions too. Some people are very brilliant and they can start higher yoga straightaway, but as far as teaching is concerned, it is better that one should start yoga in a gradual way.



In the beginning one has to learn yoga from a teacher. An expert teacher can teach you raja yoga, bhakti yoga, etc., but if you want to go deeper and higher in the field of experience then it is very important that you must find a guru, because he has to find out the scale or point of your evolution. According to the growth of your evolution he will find out which particular form of higher yoga is suitable for your personal growth.

To find a guru and to recognize a guru is also a form of yoga and for that you have to practise some form of yoga in the beginning. After you have practised yoga for some time, the preliminary forms of yoga, then you will develop a sort of insight and then it is easy for you to recognize the guru for yourself.

Q. What of the conflict for a person who is already living family life and who wants to follow spiritual life?

Paramahansaji: There is no conflict; there is no contradiction between spiritual life or yogic life or family life. Of course, many people do feel that they are incompatible, but one's family life is really a stepping stone to one's spiritual growth. By every definition, as far as I know, family life is an aid to inner experience, but of course it is necessary for one to maintain a proper balance or relationship between one's practices and duties or obligations. Sometimes people over-emphasize spiritual life and sometimes they over-emphasize family life; that is imbalance.

—Discourse and satsang at Ag. Nikolaos, Minos Beach Hotel, Crete, 28 April 1984

Exoteric and Esoteric Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

There are various opinions, positive as well as negative, on yogic science, but in recent years modern science has exploded the myths about yoga. The question before them is whether it is possible to deal with psychic and somatic diseases through certain practices of yoga, and the conclusions the scientists have come to is that it is possible.

Basically, there are two forms of yoga known as esoteric and exoteric yoga. There are certain yoga practices which are directly linked with the body, mind, emotions and intellect. These practices, which are related to the external side of man, can be known as exoteric yoga. This form of yoga has become very popular with the young people of the world today because there are thousands and thousands of teachers in every part of the world who are engaged in teaching this exoteric system, all for the betterment of mankind.

This system of yoga is very easy and at the same time it has no spiritual or occult significance. There are millions of people in the world who do not care for the mystic life, for mystic experience or for spiritual life, what they need is a healthy body and a mind which can cope with the stresses.

It has been found, it has been proved, that stress is the greatest enemy of our present civilization. First there is tension, then there is anxiety and that is followed by stress. Finally it dissolves into distress. Many ways have been tried for resolving the stressful situations by various

methods. Sometimes the stress is just superficial and we can manage it, but many times stress becomes the nature of our personalities and then it becomes very difficult to handle. You must have seen many people who, by nature, are always under stress conditions and they don't know how else to function. According to yoga and according to modern science, it is the cause of most diseases today. It is not only high blood pressure or cardiovascular disease, even peptic ulcer, diabetes and migraine can be caused by stress. The system of yoga which deals with these problems is exoteric.

Esoteric yoga

There is another form of yoga known as esoteric yoga, or the yoga of spiritual life. This system of yoga is meant for a few people who are really qualified to take to the spiritual path, therefore this yoga is not taught by teachers but it is taught by the guru himself to a disciple.

Of course, according to the traditional system of yoga, exoteric yoga is the preliminary path and esoteric forms of yoga are the higher path. Both of them are connected and interdependent. The philosophy of this inner yoga says that man is more than this body and mind. The body is not the man and the mind is not the man; the real person, the real Self, is behind these. Therefore, it is necessary for everyone to discover the Self.

It is the primary hypothesis in the system of yoga that man does not know himself. What you know is your body and your name. Many people do not even know what lies in their mind, therefore most people are in a state of ignorance. This ignorance, this nescience, is something like blindness. A blind man cannot see the sun, but he knows that there is a sun. You can explain to him what the sun is like. If he is intelligent maybe he can understand theoretically, but he cannot see the sun unless he can



open his eyes. In the same way, if I tell you that you have something more in you, the Self, or the I, or the light, or something like that, you may agree but you can't see it.

One message

Many thousands of years ago in India, the wise men, sages, seers and rishis, said that you should know who you are. Their writings are in the form of the Upanishads. They said, "You are not this body, nor are you the senses, nor this mind, nor material existence, but you are effulgent and infinite and a homogeneous something."

Afterwards, there appeared a great man in India; his name was Buddha. He used to call this state of knowledge nirvana. He said that when you transcend the body idea and other material ideas, then you come to an experience which is called nirvana. A little later there appeared another wise man, a great seer or philosopher, in Greece. He used to say to all his followers, admirers and friends just one phrase, "Know thyself." Socrates was his name. He said many things and of course the people of Greece must know all about it, but the central theme of his teaching was just two words, "Know thyself."

In India this was the teaching of the Vedas and the Upanishads. This was the teaching of Buddha and this was the teaching of Socrates. When you say, "Know thyself", it really means that you must know that Self which you do not know. Knowledge of the Self comes to one gradually, step by step.

The layers of being

You must know the mind but before you know the mind, you must know the forces within your body. You know about your body, there is no doubt about it. It is composed of bones, blood, muscles, nerves, marrow, so on and so forth, but the question is, "Is there nothing beyond this?"



Do we live by blood, bones, muscles, nerves and marrow? No, in this physical body there are forces of energy. In yoga they are known as the solar and lunar forces. These two forces in your physical body control your life and your mental functions. The knowledge of these two forces can come to you through the practices of hatha yoga, but besides these two forces there are other forces in you. For example, emotional force: we love and we hate, we have feelings and sentiments, we have jealousy, we have anger. These are manifestations of emotion. If that force is not in you then you can't love, you can't hate.

Take a very gross example: the electric light proves that there is energy because it cannot shine without that energy so there is a force behind the light. In the same way there is hatred, love, jealousy, greed and anger. These are what we call manifestations or expressions of a particular

force. That force has to be realized. You can realize that force through the practices of the bhakti yoga system, but behind these physical, material and natural forces there is something more.

Stopping the mind

How to experience it? Can you experience it just by thinking? Is it possible for your mind to experience it or do you have to transcend the mind to experience that? This is a very difficult situation. In yoga they say very clearly you stop the mind and then you will have experience, because the mind is finite, the mind is born of matter, the mind functions within time and space. The mind has got its limited dimensions, the categories of the mind are time, space and object. The experience which Socrates mentioned and which Buddha called nirvana is not the subject matter of the mind. Those

people who are trying to discover this state of experience will certainly come to a point of realization that the mind has to be transcended, because when we meditate or contemplate we are moving within the realms of our own mind and not beyond the mind.

Even in modern science there is a certain behaviour which cannot be determined by any laws of the mind. The great scientist Eddington talks about the law of indeterminacy. He is observing the illogical and unmathematical behaviour of electrons. When there is a movement in matter it is scientifically and mathematically predictable, but when matter is behaving in an eccentric way, what are you going to conclude or say? The scientist says that this indeterminacy of behaviour in the electrons can only be understood if the mind can jump over the mind.

I just wanted to let you know that the mind behaves within a determined law. In order to have that deeper experience your mind will have to jump over the mind, but when all is said and all is understood, one question remains. How to do it? For thousands of years people have been trying to have that experience. For thousands of years people have tried to get out of the boundaries of mundane experience. They have been trying to go beyond the empirical experience, but then how to do it? The mind seems to stand as a barrier between myself and the experience. It is here that the practices of esoteric yoga come to our practical help.

Prana: the life force

In the system of yoga they have made it very clear that life controls mind and mind controls life. The life force is called prana in yoga. Prana is individual life force and the cosmic life force. It is not the breath we inhale. No. It is not the oxygen by which we live. This life force is a creative force which is responsible for existence and for

evolution. When there is disturbance in the life force, there is disturbance in the mind.

In yoga there are two clear concepts: total life force is called macrocosmic life and individual life force is known as microcosmic life. In the same way there is macrocosmic mind and there is microcosmic mind. If you want to control the mind you must learn to control the prana, or if you want to control the pranic force then you should control the mind first.

Pranayama, controlling the life force

How to control the prana? The pranas should be controlled through the practice of pranayama which is linked through this body to the cosmic prana. Just as you have an electromagnetic field or a radioactive field and many other fields through which energy flows, in the same way, in your body there is a pranic field. Not only inside but outside the body also there is a pranic field. You are linked with that cosmic, pranic field.

How is it? Let me give you an example. Put a radio here. Tune it to certain frequencies. Immediately you are connected with Athens, BBC, Voice of America. Whichever frequency you tune in to, you are immediately connected through that field, there is a link. In the same way the pranic field, the life field in this physical body is linked with the cosmic prana, with the total pranic force. In order to communicate with the higher field of prana, it is necessary that you should be able to purify your pranic force through yoga practices.

Most of us do not even know that we breathe. Do you know that you breathe? Just try to understand this one small thing: from the time of your birth until death you breathe, unbroken breathing. You breathe consciously and unconsciously, voluntarily and involuntarily, but mostly unconsciously. The whole night you are breathing,



you don't know it. The whole day you are breathing, you don't know it. When you are a baby you are breathing, you don't know it. Is it not something very surprising that your breathing process, which is so intimate, so important, so close, is something you don't know about, you have never known?

Just become aware of the breath. This is the way. This breath is very gross. The breath is tangible. You can feel it, you can understand it, you can concentrate on it, you can observe its inspiration and its expiration. It may not be possible for one hour, but at least for ten minutes you can do it, because it is not abstract. I am not trying to tell you to concentrate on something abstract.

So, our yoga starts with pranic awareness. Of course there may be people in this world who may not be able to feel their breath. In 1968 I went to one country. I will not tell you the name of that country. There I was invited for an interview by the editor of a national newspaper. He wanted to print something in his newspaper about yoga. I was explaining to him about concentration, awareness, alternation of inspiration and expiration, but that man could not understand it. He asked me, "I breathe, but how do I know?" There are very gross people in the world who do not even know that they are breathing. Of course, for them there is another preliminary yoga.

Mantra

When you have established your concentration on the breathing process for some time, then you can go to the next step. More subtle than the life force is sound. I don't mean the sound that I make when I am talking to you. When I say 'sound', I mean the higher frequencies of sound which cannot be heard through the ears. This sound is also a cosmic matter. This sound is known in yoga as mantra. Mantra is a sound which is a form of your inner

concentration. When you are able to visualize your own breath, then you must try to discover what the sound of the breath is. This is how you go, step by step, within.

The third eye

When you have discovered the sound, then you should concentrate on a centre in the middle of the eyebrows. There are many important centres on which you can concentrate within the body. You can concentrate on the tip of the nose, in the centre of the heart, on the centre in the navel, on the top of the brain, but the centre in the middle of the eyebrows is a very powerful centre.

This particular centre has been well known throughout the world through the ages. In the times of the Atlantean civilization they used to concentrate on this as a third eye. The third eye represents the eye of intuition. By concentrating on this particular centre you develop a tiny spark of light. This tiny spark can be manifested by concentrating at the eyebrow. If you find it difficult to concentrate on that centre then there are some preliminary practices.

The practice of trataka

One practice I can tell you about is very simple. Place a lighted candle in front of you, make the flame steady. Keep the body steady, spine upright and straight. First pacify your mind by concentrating on the breath, then gaze at the steady flame of the candle for as long as it is easy or comfortable to do so. Then close your eyes and concentrate on the middle of the eyebrows. You will find the reflection of the candle. Gradually the flame will disappear. Finally, after a few days, a tiny spark of light will remain.

In yoga this tiny spark is known as the bindu. Bindu means point. Bindu means a drop. Bindu means a centre. Bindu also means a nucleus. This particular spark of light becomes the central point of inner experience. What

happens after that it is not necessary for me to tell you now, because it is a matter of understanding, it is a matter of discussion between guru and disciple. For this you need a guru and not just a teacher.

The teacher of yoga has knowledge. He is an expert, he can teach you pranayama, asana, etc., but guru has not only knowledge but experience. Experience is something which is very intimate to your inner self. When Buddha said 'nirvana' and Socrates said "Know thyself" and the Upanishads also said "Know thyself", what they meant was "Know your experience."

Inner experience

This particular experience is known by various names, but don't be deluded by names. We have to give some name. Socrates said 'Self', the Upanishads said 'atman', Buddha said 'nirvana'. I call it experience. Everything is synonymous. We do not try to explain definitions or names; it is a process of reducing the gross into the subtle.

Just as when you go outside you can hear music, you see flowers and things; through the mind you have pleasure and pain, through the mind you have external, sensorial experience. Just as the mind projects itself out, in the same way the mind should withdraw itself inside. Every night you withdraw yourself into profound sleep and you know nothing during that time, you don't know who is next to you, you don't know where you are or even who you are, but every morning you come out. So you know how to go to sleep and how to get up. In the same way, yoga tells us that if you know how to go out and experience the external world, you should also know how to go in and experience the inner world.

The external problem

This is the problem of our culture today and on account of this problem we are unhappy. On account of this

problem we are dissatisfied, because we only know how to project outside and we do not know how to go inside. Now you should try to experience inner life as much as you are experiencing the external life. You will get great satisfaction, because this is a state of balance.

The modern culture is an imbalanced culture, because its emphasis is on matter. It's all right, but why only overemphasize matter? Is matter the only definition of life? No, even scientists don't agree. Scientists started with physics. Our scientists started the whole game with physics and now they are in metaphysics. Einstein and many other scientists do not say that matter is ultimate and absolute. In fact, matter is a gross form of energy. Therefore, we must accept energy and not the matter.

Yoga goes a bit further. What is the philosophy of yoga? The philosophy of yoga states that matter is the gross form of energy or shakti, but energy is the gross form of consciousness, the Self, or the atma. Consciousness is atma; consciousness is the 'Self' of Socrates. This consciousness, when it becomes gross, becomes energy. That is the first manifestation. In later manifestations it becomes matter.

The long journey

In yoga, you have to reverse the whole process. From matter you reverse to energy, from energy you go back to consciousness. This energy needs meditation, dhyana yoga. These are the rules: sit down quietly, close your eyes, fix your mind, forget everything and go in as much as you can. Day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, go in.

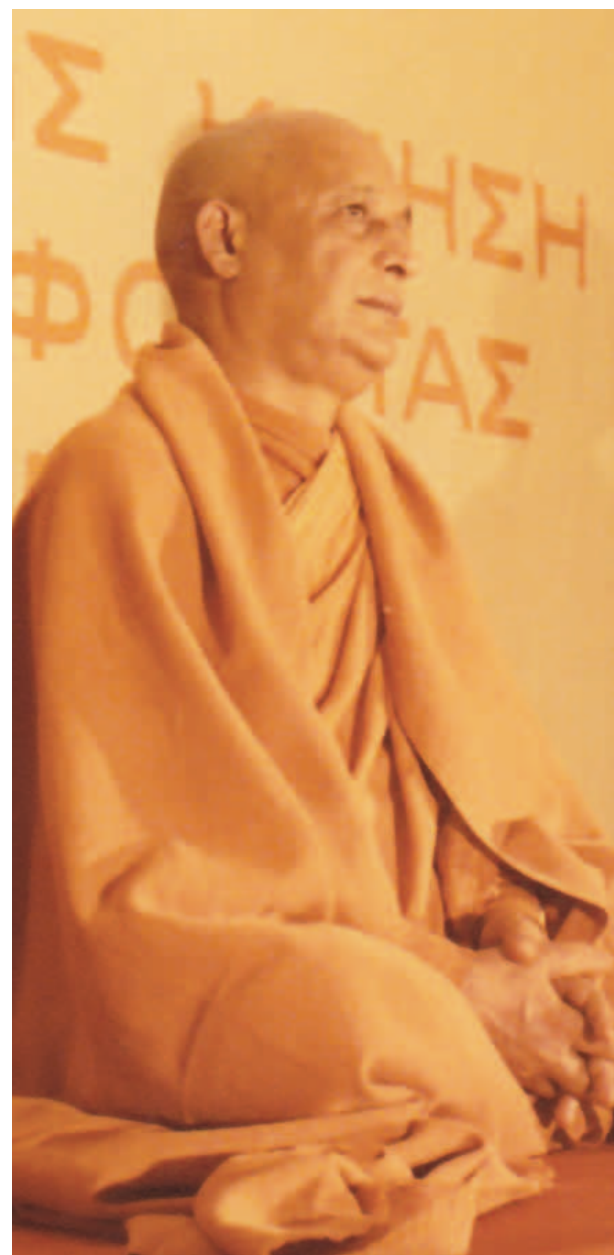
In this life you may not know the Self but you will be well on the way. What you don't achieve in this life you can always achieve later because life is eternal. Life is not bound by time. Death does not destroy life, it only changes the experience of life.

Well, I have not been able to tell you more about yoga, there is too much of it to talk about. I can only request all of you to give a little thought to the necessity of yoga in your life. If you are spiritual, well and good, but if not, at least you will be able to achieve good health and a healthy mind. Yoga is down-to-earth and practical. There are so many yoga practices and I am sure that you will have enough inspiration to start.

—Discourse at Rhodes, 30 April 1984

The role of guru is to realise the karma of his disciple, to realise the total destiny of the disciple. According to that he will suggest to him what to do. That is the main role of a guru in the life of a disciple.

Just as a jeweller analyses the jewels in detail, similarly the guru analyses the total destiny, nature and quality of the disciple.



Press Conference

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. About how many people practise yoga in Greece?

Paramahamsaji: It is not possible to give any specific number because yoga is so popular nowadays that many thousands of people practise it. Some years ago, many people feared that it was a religion and, well, they had their own suspicions, but in recent years science has accepted yoga. Even in space they are experimenting on yoga.

Q. What moved the people to come closer to yoga?

Paramahamsaji: They have seen that it is very useful for their physical, emotional and mental health. Today there is a lot of stress in everybody's life and on account of this stress there are a lot of mental and physical sufferings. If people take to medicine it also has negative and far-reaching effects, therefore they



are turning more and more to the practices of yoga as the scientists are advocating.

Q. What does it mean exactly that medicine has far-reaching negative effects?

Paramahamsaji: All the scientists are saying these days that the medicines which we take have negative effects in the course of time. They do cure one form of illness, but then they create another form of illness.

Q. What are the three basic types of people who follow yoga?

Paramahamsaji: There are those who have physical problems, those who are undergoing mental stress, or those who want to know about themselves.

Q. What are the youngest and oldest ages which allow you to practise yoga?

Paramahamsaji: One can start practising yoga from the age of eight and practise it up to any age, according to one's physical health. One can make a little change here and there in the practices of yoga if one is old. There are some mental and spiritual forms of yoga which can be done even by someone who is physically very weak.

Q. A yoga union was recently reported in Greece. How many members are there in the union and how many, if possible, for the world?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga does not have any membership because it is a very vast movement and even people engaged in teaching yoga number many thousands. However, one thing can be said, that the people who believe in yoga come from every section of society; you can be an ordinary worker in the factory, or a scientist,



a philosopher or an industrial magnate. About four years ago they found the number of registered yoga teachers in western Europe was over 72,000. From this you can imagine how many people must be practising.

Q. Do the people who actually practise yoga have a professional life or become secluded?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga has nothing to do with seclusion. Yoga is a system of physical and mental health and therefore people who have their own professional life need yoga more than a person who is living in seclusion.

Q. What are the solutions that yoga has to offer to people who have either physical or mental problems?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga is a system of practical techniques which are to be practised by the person every day. These practices are sometimes physical, sometimes mental and sometimes spiritual. If, for example, one is suffering from a disease called asthma, then one is taught to practise



certain techniques every day which include some physical postures and some breathing techniques. If someone is suffering from high blood pressure or coronary problems then they are taught the techniques of relaxation and concentration. In this way, there are various techniques in yoga.

I have read that the reason why we have a lot of tension is because we have lots of thoughts and desires, and this shows that mind is not under our control. The article said that one shouldn't worry but just occupy the mind with other things in life.

Stress is necessary for the evolution of life. If there were no stress you would be like a vegetable; the nation, the society and the individual would not grow, but then there is a limit to the amount of stress that man can handle. Maybe if one has a strong mind one can handle greater stress, but many people can't handle a lot of stress. They get heart problems, blood pressure and so on.

So we have to do two things at the same time: first, increase our nervous resistance through pranayama and concentration, and second, decrease the stress. When the

stress continues for some time then it creates problems and sometimes the stress continues for the whole day and the whole night.

If you have control of the mind then you can stop thinking about the stress. You can occupy your mind with some positive thing, but that alone will not do because after some time you will come back to the stress. We can't escape the reality of stress, therefore it is important that we increase the capacity of our brain, heart and nervous system. For this purpose there are practices of yoga which cannot eliminate, but can balance the stress.

There is another aspect of stress which is biochemical. When the stress continues in the body for some time, then the body begins to secrete chemicals and if this secretion of chemicals continues off and on then it is very dangerous. It can cause peptic ulcer, migraine, even cancer or heart attack, nervous breakdown, menstrual or hormonal problems. How to stop that? It is here that yoga comes into the picture. There are certain practices of yoga which stop this process of biochemical secretion.

Q. Are people who practise yoga usually vegetarian?

Paramahamsaji: No, it is not at all necessary to be a vegetarian for the practice of yoga. These are two independent issues. In certain cases vegetarianism is harmful, but that has nothing to do with yoga. In certain cases vegetarianism is good for the body, so one has to use common sense here. Practices of yoga are connected with the average person. There are now millions of Americans, Japanese and Europeans practising yoga, sometimes they are advised to take a non-vegetarian diet, according to their problem.

Q. Is there any special reason why you all wear the same clothes and have short hair or shaved heads?

Paramahamsaji: We are sannyasins, which means that we are dedicated to spiritual life. Therefore, we try to live in a very disciplined and orderly manner. Throughout the world we have so many dedicated people like us that if we do not live a disciplined life but live in a haphazard way according to our own whims, then there would be chaos. Just like in the army or among medical surgeons, discipline is necessary for us also.

This colour represents a certain psycho-emotional quality, not depression, nor sensuality, nor austerity. It represents a dynamic life with great ideals, therefore I have founded this system throughout the world. We have people from the Hindu religion, Muslim religion, Jews and Christians, believers and nonbelievers in God. Men and women come from different parts but here they appear as one.

Q. How does yoga help in knowing oneself?

Paramahamsaji: This is a very important and ancient part of yoga. When one wants to know about one's Self, then first of all one should search for the right person from whom one can receive direction. That right person is known as guru. The guru will find out the extent of evolution of the person and will decide what practices they should do.

These practices are known as higher yoga; you can say, esoteric yoga. This is when meditation is taught and the energy centres in the body are known. Then the mind is lifted a little above the normal life and gradually one begins to experience the inner life. One begins to realize one's own mind, emotions and ego. Gradually, one is taken further and further into the Self. This particular yoga is taught by a guru to his disciple.

—Hotel Holiday Inn, Athens, 2 May 1984

Transcending Karma

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

In this world everything is so easy and so intellectual that we can understand by a process of thinking. Our mind is built in such a way that it can understand everything that is empirical and everything that is material.

In the process of creation, we find that there are two types of movements. We can call those two processes evolution and involution. The process of evolution is an outcome of the laws of some sort of nature. In the realm of minerals, in the realm of vegetables, in the realm of animals and also in the realm of human beings, the entire process of evolution is controlled by some sort of nature.

Prakriti and purusha: nature and consciousness

According to yoga, the whole process of evolution comes within the realm of prakriti, or nature, and this evolution is concerned with the mind, emotion, intellect and ego. For example, a vegetable could not think, or an animal did not have the quality of intellectual cognition, but as evolution continued, that property came into existence and man could cognize. Yoga is basically the path of involution, for here you are not trying to understand the realm of nature or the properties or qualities of nature, but you are trying to understand the nature of consciousness, purusha. From this we also come to understand the properties or qualities of nature, but you are trying to understand the nature of consciousness.

From this we also come to understand that there are two worlds or two universes. One universe is created,

directed and controlled by nature and another universe is made up of consciousness, chit or atma. This universe is made up of Self. It was this Self that Socrates wanted us to know. The other important thing is that the external universe is finite and imperfect. The external world which I am talking about, which is subject to the evolution of nature, is divided. It is not homogeneous nor infinite, nor complete, whereas the inner universe is one, is complete, is infinite. In yoga, therefore, the process is from finite to infinite, from diversity to unity, from prakriti to purusha.

Avidya: blindness

There is a problem. We can see the external universe, however incomplete that is. We can understand the movement and the nature of laws and objects, but if you try to look into yourself you see nothing. It seems that a dark curtain is drawn between yourself and the object. This is called blindness. Why can't you see something which is within you? How funny it is that you are able to see something which is outside you! You are able to see something which you are not and you are not able to see something which you are. The jewel is in the pocket but you don't know it; this is called blindness. In yoga it is called avidya or ignorance or nescience.

Incapacity to experience yourself is on account of a great force called avidya, therefore one of the missions of yoga should be to destroy that avidya. Whichever form of yoga you adopt for yourself, the first mission or purpose of that should be to rend asunder that veil.

We do try to meditate because we are sincere people. We meditate for decades but we are not able to jump over the mind. Every experience that we have through meditation is certainly nothing but a quality of our own mind, but we are not practising in order to know the mind. We have been practising in order to transcend the mind,



in order to jump over the mind and yet every time we try to jump over the mind, we are within the mind. This has been the problem of everybody. If you don't recognize the problem, that's okay, but if you do recognize it you will realize that this problem is a hard nut to crack.

The practical techniques of tantra

At the age of eighteen I was first initiated into the practical techniques of tantra by a thirty-five year old tantric yogini. She was able to detonate very good experiences in me, but I realized that I was not able to go beyond the fence. I could go to a particular point in experience and stay there, stagnant. By that time she had already gone somewhere else, God knows where. Now I understand that even if she had been there she couldn't have done it because she taught me a very important and powerful system of penetrating into the abyss of the mind, but she could not and did not teach me how to become mindless. Every experience I had with her was a mental experience. It could have been subconscious mental experience, it could have been unconscious mental experience, but it was not mindless experience.

Service of the guru: karma yoga

To be brief, that brought me to my guru. I myself did not know how my guru would help me, but one thing he told me, "Work hard, serve me, then the mind will be purified" and that did the work. Therefore, all yoga aspirants must understand the relevance of work, the relevance of karma yoga, in the science of raja yoga or other forms of yoga. You should try to purify the contents of the mind, then experience comes to you spontaneously.

The avidya or blindness or ignorance exists in your karma and the totality of karma creates ignorance. These karmas we have inherited. These karmas we have been carrying with us in our inner body, incarnation after

incarnation. These karmas are in many forms in us and that is what we call the centre of human gravity. Just as you throw a stone up metres high, but finally it comes down because of the force of gravity, in the same way you throw the mind high and penetrate into yourself, but again it will come down to the same point of ignorance because the mind is attached to the creation of prakriti. Every time you shoot the mind high up into the spiritual life, it comes down to the same point again. It is here that the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita seems to be very relevant, because it is to involve yourself in action, in total action, with a spirit of inaction.

Classical explanations of karma

There is a parable in the Buddhist chronicles. One of the disciples of Buddha, Nagarjuna by name, came to Greece. King Menander was the ruler. The king asked Nagarjuna how to fix his karma, he said to Nagarjuna that every

time we try to go beyond karma we come back to karma, again and again. It is also neither possible nor practical, nor even advisable for us to become inactive. We don't destroy karma by becoming inactive.

So, what did Nagarjuna tell him? He asked the king to bring about a handful of gram. He divided that into two parts; one part he gave to the king and asked for it to be roasted, the other part he asked to have planted in a flowerpot somewhere. Then he said, "Oh king, the roasted gram will not germinate because it has lost the potential of its karma", but the other part of the gram will germinate and grow because it has its karma, its samskara, its archetypes intact. When this seed comes in contact with water, earth, air and sun, it will germinate.

The same thing is said in the Bhagavad Gita. The mind, with the help of the senses in association with the objects, creates an external sensual experience. Throughout life, whichever experiences you have during waking or



dreaming are an outcome of combinations of the mind, senses and object. However, you have to remember one thing: the mind, object and senses themselves cannot create an experience. For experience, there has to be a seed, there has to be a karma, there has to be passion, vasana. If there is no karma, then mind, object and senses can create nothing. Therefore, through the practices of yoga you don't kill the mind, you don't kill the senses, and you don't denounce the object; you are only trying to roast the potential seed, that's all.

In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali it is said that the craving for the object which you have seen and which you have heard must be controlled. Deep within the mind there is a craving. Sometimes you know about it, sometimes you don't, or that's what the psychologists tell us and maybe you also know it. Many times you are thirsty, but you don't know it. Many times you have cravings you don't know about, but when you face the object, then you will be thirsty.

Now, this thirst is dependent on a previous experience of a particular type. These experiences are primarily of five types: those related to visual perception, audition, taste, touch (actual consciousness) and smell. The mind associates with the object through one, two, three, four or all of the five faculties, but then it is important to have this experience already somewhere within you, therefore sense experience has a basis in previous experience.

This previous experience is in various forms. In yoga, in philosophy, we call them samskara and nowadays in the modern world they say, "Ah, karma, that is his karma." In modern psychology and Hindu philosophy they are known as archetypes. Your previous experiences, the thousands and millions and trillions of them are based in you in the form of archetypes. They are in such number you can't imagine it. The totality of these archetypes is called karma.

This is responsible for incarnation. This is responsible for your destiny and this is the basis for evolution, and you have to stop it. You have to stop this process. Then only the involution process will start; not going forth but coming back, not outside but inside.

The Bhagavad Gita gives very clear instruction on this point. It says, "You can't get out of action, you can't renounce life, you can't renounce karma." Even if you renounce external karma, the mental karmas will continue. Just walking is not karma. Just typing is not karma. Going to a shop or working in the kitchen is not karma. When you are desiring it is also karma. Karma is a kind of movement that is taking place within you, maybe in the body, maybe in the mind, maybe in the emotions. Therefore, not even for a single moment can man remain without action, either physical, mental, emotional or on some other level of his being which we do not observe.

The binding power of karma

If that is the truth, then how to transcend karma? No, karma is deeply rooted within one's quality of relationship with the object or with the person or with the event. For example, I have a maid servant. She is working with my family, she looks after my brother, sister and children. She is a very good servant, she loves everybody, she serves everybody day and night. When my brother, sister or children fall ill she keeps awake at night and is very anxious to see them well.

One day she receives a telegram from her town. The telegram says her son is not well. It disturbs her completely, she goes completely out of gear. That is karma. She is working with my family; that is not karma, it is akarma. You understand akarma? Inaction is akarma. She is not working with her son, she goes there maybe once in a year during Easter or Christmas, but that has disturbed her.

When something in your life disturbs you, that is karma. When love does not disturb you, when success does not disturb you and failure does not disturb you, when happiness does not disturb you, that means you have no karma. That has to be achieved first, then meditation will bloom, then you don't have to learn meditation from me; close your eyes and evolution begins.

The problem is not that you cannot meditate, the problem is not because your guru is not teaching you the right meditation, the problem is the quality of yourself. You are erecting a mansion without a foundation, or you are making nice dishes without salt, or dessert with no sugar. What is very important in this particular respect is to understand that you are trying to go in, but you have kept yourself bound to a post. In India, as an example, we have a very primitive, conventional method of making sugarcane juice. One pair of bullocks go on rotating a machine which squeezes the sugarcane juice, they do it day and night. During the twelve or eight hours they must walk at least fifty miles, but they still move no further. That is exactly what is happening in our meditation, because we are rotating there and not going beyond.

Vairagya: understanding and disidentification

We should break the cord we are afraid of. "Oh, I will have to renounce desires. My God, I will have to renounce passions and love, oh no, it's not possible." That is our fear, because we don't understand. There is no renunciation in it, there is only a process of understanding and disidentification. Yoga calls that particular spirit vairagya; not dispassion, not detachment, not renunciation. It is exactly the spirit with which the maidservant is working sincerely with my family.

I had a disciple. He was a treasurer in a bank. One morning he went to the bank to find that it had been

looted in the night; he came back, that's all. After some time he lost twenty-five rupees from his own pocket and went to pieces completely. That is because of the duality of association, because with that twenty-five rupees there was the seal 'mine'. When the thousands went from the bank there was no seal of 'mine'. These are very subtle things in our personality which deal with our karma.

I know that everybody has the capacity to disidentify. When you love a boy, he is yours. When you love a girl, she is yours, but after some time, if he or she is not according to your wishes, they are not yours. How quickly disidentification has taken place. The quality of vairagya is present in everyone. However we still are not able to do it because we are afraid. We have some sort of fear within us but I can assure you of one thing and you may believe it: the quality of happiness and satisfaction is greater with vairagya.

If nothing can disturb your mind, don't you believe the quality of happiness is greater? Success makes you happy, then failure makes you unhappy so the happiness is gone, but if you can continue the same happiness in spite of failure, the happiness will be greater, the happiness will be enduring. Therefore, the Bhagavad Gita says you must live with the spirit of karma yoga.

Life: expressing the karma

Karma yoga is not just a charitable act. Karma yoga is an act which you do with complete awareness, through which your mind, your soul and Self will be purified. Why should I marry? Why should I have children, why should I work, why should I earn money? Because that is a process for fixing my karma. It is a process for fixing the passions, fixing the insecurities and fixing the greed. The various stages which you are undergoing in your life are nothing but a way to work out your own karma, to do away with the karma.

A joke: if you take a purgative pill, what will happen? You go to the toilet ten times, fifteen times, twenty times; everything will come out. So, there has to be some catalyst, there has to be something which should excite the karma. Passion is karma. Anger is karma. Jealousy and greed are karma. Oh, I am only giving you some examples, there is a big list of karma. How are you going to get this karma out of you? Or are you going into the grave with this karma? Or will you attain samadhi with this karma? Go into samadhi with passions and greed and everything? No, you have to throw them into the toilet.

Take a purgative pill. The wife is that, the husband is that, these good and bad and naughty children are that, this good friend, that wretched friend, this hopeless friend, that idiot, is the purgative pill. This has to be your attitude in life, then passion is not passion, then nothing is maya, then nothing is worldly. Why did I marry? To transcend passion. Why am I amassing wealth? To transcend greed. That is how the life of the householder is designed. In India they used to call the life of a householder grihastha ashrama. A yoga ashram is a place where you practise yoga; grihastha ashrama is a place where you practise life.

Nirvana samadhi: knowledge of the Self

By pursuing the life of a householder correctly you will be able to accomplish success in karma yoga, then your meditation will lead you to samadhi without doubt. Even as a man does not need a technique to sleep when he is absolutely tired, even as a man who is hungry for days together does not have to search for taste, in the same way a man who has achieved the proper frame of karma yoga in his life does not need anything for meditation; when he closes his mind, he knows himself.

Many thousands of years ago in India, the rishis said, "Know the Self." Then came Buddha who said, "Attain



nirvana within yourself." After that there came another wise man in this country who also said the same thing, "Know thyself." Since then there have been many gurus throughout the world who have been saying the same thing, "Know thyself."

I have made it a point to tell people that the practices of yoga initiate a process of involution in you, but yoga is not just raja yoga. Is the wall the house, is the roof the house, is the floor the house, is the window the house or is the foundation the house? Tell me, what is the house? What is yoga? Karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga, hatha yoga, kundalini yoga, kriya yoga, laya yoga, mantra yoga, etc. All these are different faculties of yoga which you must practise accordingly from time to time, and you should practise them steadily.

If your emotions are powerful, practise bhakti yoga. If you are not able to transcend attachment, passions, then practise karma yoga. If your mind is undisciplined, practise raja yoga. If you lack intellectual clarity, practise jnana yoga. If you want to awaken your kundalini, practise laya yoga, kriya yoga, kundalini yoga, mantra yoga.

—Discourse at Omilos Exipiretton, Athens, 2 May 1984

Know Thyself

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

In the last few decades the world has been talking about yoga, and different nationalities and religions have tried to form an opinion about it. In olden days yoga was used to improve and develop the inner spirit of man. Our ancestors believed that without the enlightenment of consciousness, a human being could not improve, therefore it was necessary that everyone should know their own Self. However, in modern times our generation at first didn't understand yoga at all. They thought that yoga was almost a cult of heretics, or some thought yoga was a sect of puritans.

When the scientists started probing into it they found that yoga can improve the health of the body. In many countries teams of scientists began to investigate yoga scientifically. They finally came to the conclusion that yoga could become a means of therapy. In the United States they conducted many experiments on the effects of yoga on the body and mind. The results, though not conclusive, are definitely very positive.

The quest for reality

In the meantime, while yoga was being resurrected by the scientists, spiritually-minded people all over the world began to ask, "Can yoga help our spiritual practices?" For thousands of years we have been told that there are bodies beyond bodies, and behind the body is a spiritual Self, or there is a transcendental reality. Very few people could have a glimpse of that experience. Most people could only talk about it; they didn't get any experience, they didn't even know how to start. They began to question if,

through yoga, it is possible to experience the higher, the sublime and the transcendental horizons of our being. It has been the philosophical quest of all religions and all civilizations from time to time. A question comes before them. What, after all, is reality?

Excepting a section of materialists, almost everybody is trying to understand or discover reality. "Is the body ultimate and is the body my definition? The mind,



the emotions, the ego, the thoughts; am I that or am I something more than that?" This is just one side of the questioning. There is another side and that is called the philosophical quest for reality in the form of divinity. What is divinity? What are these divinities and deities? Many thousands of years ago in India this subject was discussed openly. The questions were discussed for many thousands of years. Finally they came to one conclusion: "Know your Self and you will know everything."

After this great philosophical movement a great man came in India, 2,600 years ago. Everyone knows him by the name of Buddha. He spoke about nirvana. Nirvana is a state where the mind jumps over the mind. A state of mind which is beyond intellect and all kinds of mental functions.

Exoteric yoga: dealing with social problems

It is true that through the practices of yoga you can attain physical health. Throughout the world, in hospitals, drug rehabilitation centres, mental hospitals and prisons, yoga is being taught for the welfare of humanity, but that is not the aim of yoga. Yoga therapy is a by-product, mental peace and relaxation are by-products, a disciplined life is a by-product, it cannot and should not be the ultimate aim of yoga.

Our generation is suffering from infirmity of understanding. It talks about spiritual things but it is rooted in matter, we are rooted in matter and sensuality; we are rooted in the mind. It was precisely because of this that the psychology of Freud could become international. Only a civilization which is suffering from poverty of intellect can talk about Freudian psychology. Unless your culture has gone down you can't talk about it. Can sensuality give you happiness? Do you believe it? Oh, you may believe in sensuality, because we are all sensualists, but sensuality cannot give health or peace of mind, sensuality cannot give normal human behaviour.

If you talk about treating your mind by sensual methods you are going from darkness to death. Unless a culture is perverted and misguided, unless a culture has become absolutely idiotic, it cannot accept that sensuality can be the road to enlightenment and better health.

It is due to this background that today we teach yoga to everybody for physical and mental health. Our culture is suffering from hypertension, stress and anxiety. In order to bring this culture to a point of resilience, to a point of tranquillity and one-pointedness, we have to drag the people to yoga. Two forms of yoga have been accepted: exoteric and esoteric. The exoteric forms of yoga are related to this physical body, to this mind and to the emotions, but exoteric yoga is only a stepping-stone. If you need it you should practise it, but the esoteric practices of yoga are more important. In the basic philosophy of yoga, it is said that if you can handle your consciousness, if you can handle your ego, if you can handle experiences, then you can handle your body as well, because this is not the only body.

Esoteric yoga: the ten subtle bodies, seven stages of consciousness

In the esoteric science of yoga there are basically and primarily three bodies: the gross, the causal and the astral. These three are further divided into ten bodies. To consider this body to be ultimate is, therefore, a philosophical error. During one's lifetime of fifty or eighty years, one should try to realize the greater and deeper and finer bodies. In order to realize these, it is important to have what we call the proper frame of mind.

In yogic philosophy we talk about the seven stages of consciousness which relate to seven final, ascending states of mind. If you like you can compare them to seven heavens, it's up to you, but these seven stages of mind are inherent in you, not outside. You have to know how

to transcend one state of mind and go on to another, and again transcend that and go on to the third and finally reach the seventh. The yoga which is known as kundalini yoga talks about the ascending states and ascending behaviour of consciousness.

You must also understand that there are two forms of consciousness: one manifested, the other unmanifested. The manifested consciousness is in the form of the mind, ego and emotions. It is through this manifested consciousness that you have cognition, but this is not the only consciousness, it is the tip of the iceberg. This unmanifested consciousness is known as 'purusha' in yoga, it was also spoken of as the Self. When the



Upanishads, Buddha and Socrates told us to know the Self, they wanted us to know this unmanifested consciousness.

Techniques to experience the unmanifested consciousness

In the science of yoga and tantra the unmanifested consciousness is known by many names. Religious-minded people call it divinity, the yogis call it shakti or kundalini shakti. This kundalini shakti is based at the root of the spine. It is lying dormant, as if sleeping, and the purpose of every yogi, the purpose of every human being, should be to awaken this shakti, the primal or original power which indicates the future evolution of mankind, or of life on this planet. All that we feel inside, all that we can see inside, all the visions we have within us, are produced by shakti, but how to awaken this shakti?

For thousands of years people tried various methods. In India, during the period of the Vedas, they tried a drink called 'soma'. With the help of this, or similar drinks, they got very high, but when they found it was detrimental to the real and true experience, it was withdrawn, it was banned. They tried many types of herbs which our generation is trying today. However, our generation is not trying them with a spiritual purpose, but in order to escape from the realities. Then they tried all kinds of funny things in order to awaken this kundalini shakti. They experimented with austerity and fasting, they experienced brahmacharya, celibacy, they experienced sensuality and sexuality, they tried alcohol, wine and women. They tried boosting the degree of fear in burial grounds. Thousands of methods were tried in India because we believe that the purpose of human life is to realize the higher consciousness.

Five methods of realizing the higher consciousness

Everything else in life is unimportant; nothing in life is important. Man is part of a macrocosmic movement,

or a macrocosmic theatre, and when we are an actor in this macrocosmic theatre we must play our part well. We believe that human life is a link in the long, long chain of evolution, so all sorts of experiments were tried and finally a conclusion was reached. They said that in order to awaken this shakti there can be five methods.

Method number one is to be born as a yogi, of yogic parents. Of course you know all of you have missed that bus, but definitely you can be the instrument of giving birth to yogic children. Is it not possible to be instruments of a higher consciousness? How can you produce such a



child, who has a yogic mind and a raised consciousness and transcendental awareness? It is possible. When in the United States the mothers could produce millions of hippie children, in Greece mothers can produce millions of yogic children. When certain countries in your generation can produce millions of drug addicts, they can also produce yogis. What is important is to change the quality of your genetics. If you practise yoga, you can bring forth yogic children.

The second method of awakening the kundalini is by the use of mantra. Mantra is sound energy, it is a part of the cosmic energy. When you produce a sound, when you produce a mantra, this mantra creates an action; it creates a vibration, a rhythm within your own self. If the mantra can be obtained from your guru, then it can work very powerfully.

The third method of awakening the kundalini is austerity, penance and tapasya. You must live a life through which the toxins of the body, the mind and the emotions are burnt completely. The body accumulates toxins. These poisonous matters are created by imbalance in catabolic and anabolic processes. Toxins are created in the mind also. We do not know how to dispose of a thought or an emotion or an idea, even if we don't like it, and that remains in the mind in the form of a toxin. Physical toxins create physical disease and mental toxins create mental disease. Through the practices of austerity these toxins are burnt.

The fourth method concerns herbs. You should not misunderstand and think that I am talking about marijuana, heroin and cocaine. These herbs are known only to the tantric gurus and they are handed over from the guru to his qualified or trusted disciple.

The fifth method concerns the practices of concentration. The aspirant has to accept from the guru

some method of eliminating the mental activities. When samadhi is experienced the awakening of kundalini takes place. It could take place by other methods as well, but the techniques through which you attain samadhi are considered the best and most favourable techniques. What is samadhi? Samadhi is a higher state where the mind switches off. During the period of samadhi this mind does not function and the individual ego hibernates.

Two methods for achieving samadhi

One method of achieving samadhi is through the systematic practice of hatha yoga, starting with the body and gradually going deeper into the mind and the Self. Through the practices of pranayama, mudras and bandhas, the breath and the mind are both suspended. The practitioner practices pranayama for a long time, according to the rules and conditions, and synchronizes pranayama, mantra and bandhas, the three locks in the body.

When the breath is retained and the bandhas are held, then the kundalini in the base centre becomes restless, the central nerve becomes operative. This is the attainment of samadhi through hatha yoga. However, when you awaken kundalini and attain samadhi through hatha yoga it is not sure that it will stay. Even after awakening the kundalini through the practices of hatha yoga, through the achievement of samadhi, there can again be a downfall in spiritual life.

There is another method of awakening kundalini, the method of raja yoga. Raja yoga is a system which improves the quality of the mind by concentration and meditation. Through the practices of raja yoga, the mind, the object and the senses are separated. How does cognition take place? If there is no mind, or if the mind is not associated with the senses, cognition will not take place. The first thing you have to do in order to stop the flow of cognition,

in order to stop the flow of external experiences, the mundane experiences, is to create a partition, a division or a separation between the mind and the senses.

Pratyahara: the fifth stage of raja yoga and the first in esoteric yoga

Raja yoga has eight steps. Discipline is the first step. Regularity is the second step. Firm posture is the third step. Practice of pranayama is the fourth step. Separation of the senses and the mind is the fifth step, and this practice is known as pratyahara.

When the senses do not carry the impulses to the brain, that is pratyahara. When the five senses are benumbed, paralyzed, invalidated, and the mind does not receive the necessary stimulus from outside, that is pratyahara. It means that the mind is isolated. This is the first step in esoteric yoga and the fifth in raja yoga. If you are able to isolate your mind from the sense impressions, you have started yoga.

The problem of how to isolate the mind comes because there is an unholy alliance between the mind and the senses. For incarnations, the mind and the senses have lived together. When you isolate the mind from the senses it becomes restless, therefore there are certain yogic practices for isolation of the mind. After you practise these, then you go to the second stage.

Dharana: concentration, the second stage of esoteric yoga

Nowadays people talk about concentration as if it was an everyday thing. "What were you doing?" "I was practising my concentration." You cannot practise concentration directly. Concentration is the outcome of an isolated state of mind. You concentrate on a candle flame, or on a symbol, or on Christ, or you concentrate on your guru. The mind runs out. You bring it back again, again it goes

away, again you are pulling it. Oh, this is bad wrestling! This indicates that you have not gone through the process of total isolation.

If you did not go through the primary school or middle school and jumped into high school, what would happen? You would fail in one of the subjects. Don't worry about concentration, it will come by itself. Don't worry about sleep, when you are tired it will come. When the body is tired you sleep automatically, spontaneously. Does the man who is tired need sleeping pills? Work in the garden, work physically the whole day, and you will see that you forget sleeping pills completely.

So, you must practise pratyahara first. It is not possible for me to tell you what the practices of pratyahara are here because I have limited time, but in raja yoga there are many practices for pratyahara. One of these is kirtan, singing a few sounds with a rhythm for one hour or half an hour. Another practice of pratyahara is nada yoga, discovering the sounds inside you.

When pratyahara is achieved you start concentration. You are trying to focus your mind on one object, it can be external and internal. Where concentration ends and meditation begins, nobody can tell you. Concentration and meditation are both almost a continuity. Concentration, meditation and samadhi, these are the three important faculties which one must have for awakening kundalini.

Tantric techniques

In kundalini yoga there is another system and that system is the tantric system. When I say tantra, I don't mean anything vulgar. I do not mean anything irreligious. There is a very ancient science known as tantra and it has given us a science known as kriya yoga. This kriya system is not exactly the system of raja yoga, it is an entirely independent system based on certain realities of human

nature and body. The kriya yoga system is based on acquiring the knowledge of the deeper parts of the body. I will give you one example.

In tantra they say that at the top of the head there is a centre. This centre is known as bindu visarga, the falling of the drop. That is the centre where a small amount of secretion or fluid is produced. This fluid is deposited in a tiny place in the cranial passage in the brain. This particular centre is connected with the upper side of the epiglottis so, in kriya yoga, you are told to turn your tongue and slowly insert it into the upper palate.

In the course of about a year or two, the tongue becomes flexible and it enters into the nasal orifice. There comes a time when this tip of the tongue is able to stimulate, is able to excite that particular nerve centre which is connected to this higher centre of the brain. When that moment comes, that is to say, when the tip of the tongue is able to operate the centre, then that centre in the brain begins to secrete fluid down into the body.

That secretion is known in tantra as amrita. Amrita means 'nectar' or 'ambrosia'. When this secretion gets mixed in the body, then the feeling in the mind changes. You begin to see visions and colours, you begin to experience inner sounds and the thoughts begin to stop. Without any effort on your part, the mind begins to stop. As the result of that particular, shall I call it super-chemical, wherever you are, the mind is withdrawn. Samadhi just takes place and as a result of that samadhi, awakening takes place. This is one of the techniques of kriya yoga.

There is another technique of kriya yoga. This is also very powerful. This does not need much concentration. They say that within the framework of the spine there are six psychic centres. The first centre is situated in the coccyx. The second is situated in the sacroiliac joint. The third is situated behind the navel. The fourth is behind the

heart. The fifth in the neck. The sixth is situated at the top of the spine or behind the mid-eyebrow centre.

The system of kriya yoga says that according to your evolution or incarnation, one of these centres is developed in you. All human beings have sensitivity in one of these six centres, you can try one, or all of them, one by one. For a few months you can concentrate on one centre, then go to the second, then the third. Try all six and you will be able to know which is your centre.

The awakening of kundalini

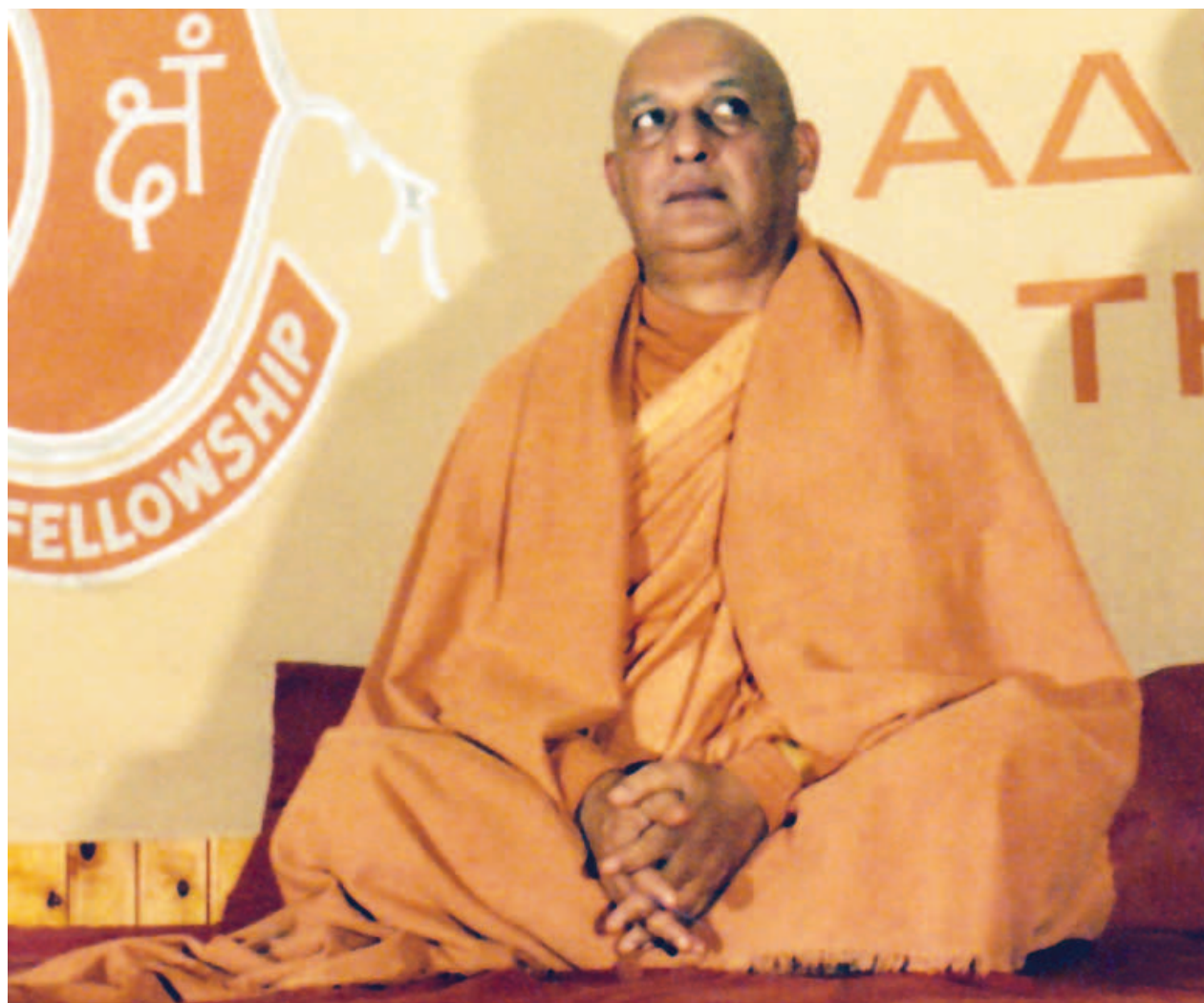
When the awakening of kundalini takes place, the human being moves from matter to consciousness. Unless you move from matter you can't understand the Self, because the Self which the Upanishads, which Buddha, which Socrates was talking about, is not a subject of the mind. You cannot understand the Self, you cannot realize the Self, you cannot experience the Self through the mind, never! The mind is finite and the Self is not finite. The Self is infinite, is absolute. The Self is perfect and homogeneous. How can this mind realize That? Therefore, in order to experience the totality of your Self, the first thing you will have to do is to jump over the mind. You cannot transcend the mind by marijuana or through sexual yoga. You cannot transcend the mind even by religion. The mind is a combination of twenty-six elements. The mind is not thought, it is not emotion, it is not memory. The mind is a form of prakriti, nature, and in order to transcend the mind you have to use the correct and proper methods.

When the awakening of kundalini takes place, there comes a vision. That vision is followed by many other visions. The first experience of kundalini is not ultimate. That is only one experience and that experience will be followed by various experiences. Therefore, yoga should be used for the experience of one's Self. We should not lose sight of that.

This country has a great philosophical heritage and here people can understand something more than material philosophy. Philosophy is ingrained within your veins and your blood. You should practise yoga for the body and the mind. It is important that you remember

that yoga should be practised for the awakening of that primordial power. And when you know the Self, you know the mind, you know the body, you know the universe.

—Discourse at Hotel Holiday Inn, Athens, 3 May 1984



Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. What does it mean to take responsibility?

Paramahamsaji: The question is not very clear, but still I will try to answer it. Everybody has a type of karma. This karma produces a destiny for him. According to this destiny he has emotions, passions and desires. In order to fulfil those inner desires he then formulates a

family or a community or a social structure for himself. In the framework of that society and community he has to fulfil certain obligations. If he fulfils those obligations then he fulfils his own desires, emotions and passions. If he does not fulfil the obligations of that family or society or community, he cannot fulfil his emotions, passions and desires.

Therefore, responsibility has two phases. Social responsibility is of one type and then the other form of responsibility is spiritual responsibility. That means in this life you also have a spiritual responsibility to fulfil.

Most people are aware of only one form of responsibility. For example, you think, “I have a wife and children and family and I have to look after them. This is my responsibility.” This is how most people feel. “My son is ill, my daughter is ill, or my father is ill, I have to educate my child.” This is all you know about responsibility. This is what is called social responsibility.

Social responsibility can be a stepping-stone to spiritual life, because by fulfilling this social responsibility you are fulfilling your emotions, passions and desires, but usually it doesn't happen. You get caught up in your social responsibilities and do not work for spiritual life. You get so deeply involved in these social responsibilities that you become completely unaware of the spiritual side. When you are only aware of your social responsibility and do not understand its spiritual purpose, then corruption creeps into your life.

There is another form of responsibility which people do not know. That is your responsibility for your spiritual evolution. Rearing a family, running a home, that alone is not your responsibility. You have a responsibility for your own self too. Therefore, side by side with your worldly responsibilities, you should also become aware of your spiritual responsibilities.

People do not really feel as strongly about the responsibility for their spiritual growth as they do about family and children. Your involvements with spiritual life are very casual, and you don't even feel that they are compulsory or obligatory. When your son is to be educated or one of your family members is to be operated upon, how deeply you feel your obligations. Even if you have no time or money, still you try. But you do not feel that for your spiritual life. You always feel casual about it, as though spiritual life is a pastime or luxury. This is why



the socialistic philosophies have criticized us. They say that spiritual life is a luxury; it is not necessary.

So, there are two forms of responsibility before us and these two types of responsibility must be blended together. Your worldly responsibility must become a stepping-stone to your spiritual life, or I may say that your worldly responsibilities must be aimed for the fulfilment of your spiritual responsibility.

Q. Is it necessary to have a personal guru in order to follow the path of yoga and if so, what is the relationship between guru and disciple? How does that relationship function?

Paramahansaji: I will answer this question in brief, but I have published a book in English on the guru and disciple relationship. The ashram will have it translated into Greek and you should try to obtain a copy of that book. That book deals with all aspects of the guru and disciple relationship.

When you want to practise the exoteric or the preliminary forms of yoga, then guru is not necessary; then you need an expert teacher. The expert teacher is known as 'acharya'. If you want to practise hatha yoga, you must have an acharya, or an expert teacher, but when you want to go deep into your own consciousness, then you must have a guru.

Just as a doctor or a surgeon knows about the body, the guru knows about the Self. If you go for an operation to a person who is not a surgeon, you know what can happen to you. In the same way, if you go to a person who does not know about the Self, you know what can happen to you.

You know the body has its own dimensions. In the same way, the mind has its dimensions and the Self also has its dimensions. The guru knows about the functions, behaviour and characteristics of the mind and at the



same time he can understand the level of his disciple. There cannot be a general way, as each disciple is slightly different from the other. Of course, all of you are Greeks, or half of you are men and half of you women, but that is merely the definition of your nationality and sex.

On the mental plane you are slightly different from one another, because the mind is controlled by three forces which are known as gunas. Guna means 'attribute', 'quality' or 'property'. These three gunas are tamo guna, rajo guna and sattwa guna which mean 'inertia', 'activity' and 'harmony'.

Many people are very lazy. They always procrastinate, sleep too much, think too much and do nothing. They are like self-complacent pigs. They are called tamo guni. These people who are predominantly tamo guni, the guru has to take them from that point of evolution.

Then there are people who are always active, hyperactive, dynamic and aggressive. They desire to achieve and work like madmen day and night. They are always dreaming of achievements. They can never sit quiet. Such people will always have ups and downs in the mind, whereas the tamo guni has no ups and downs; he doesn't have tension, blood pressure, heartache. The tamo guni is always lazy but the rajasic person will always have stress problems. Now the guru has to choose another form of practice for him. If the practices for a rajo guni are given to a person who is a tamo guni, there will be disaster for him. In the same way, if the practices good for a tamo guni are prescribed for a rajo guni, there will be no result.

Then there are people who are sattwa guni, harmonious, balanced. They maintain a balance between the negative and the positive result of their life. Their mind is always in a state of balance. Of course, these people are very few.

Many times a sattwic person and a tamasic person look alike, because their external performance, external

reaction, external personality looks alike. Unless these two are exposed to a guru, they can't be known.

According to these three qualities of the mind, there are five stages of evolution. These stages are related to a combination because nobody is totally tamasic and nobody is totally rajasic or sattwic. We are a combination; some of us are predominantly tamasic and a little bit rajasic and sattwic. Some of us are predominantly rajasic or predominantly sattwic, with the elements of the other two gunas intermixed. According to this combination, there are five stages. The lowest stage is called a totally and absolutely dull state of mind. This dull state of mind has neither spiritual aspirations nor worldly ambitions. Such a person does not want enlightenment. He does not want prosperity. He does not want anything. He just lives like a vegetable. This is the primitive state of mind.

In the second rung of evolution is the scattered state of mind. In this state of mind one is dissipated, like a monkey. If you give a piece of cloth to a monkey he will work on that cloth for about five minutes or ten minutes and then completely forget it. His mind is waxing and waning. Have you seen your children doing this? They take one thing, they fight for it, they demand it, they play with it for some time and then completely forget it. This is the second rung in the evolution of the mind.

The third state of mind is called the oscillating mind. The oscillation of the mind is like a pendulum. It goes out and comes back to the same point. Higher than that is the one-pointed mind. The final state of mind is when it is under proper control.

Now, these are the diverse stages of the human mind of the disciple. Unless you are exposed to a guru, nothing can be done in spiritual life, but then there are many other things regarding the guru and disciple relationship because there are many types of gurus.



There are yogi gurus, jnani gurus, tantric gurus and all of them have expertise in one of those fields. According to your qualifications or nature, you must get a particular type of guru.

Q. There is a strong wish to experience the universe, to dissolve in God and until then, I need help to play the correct role which is meant for me in the general plan and also help my family. How can I achieve this? I ask to be accepted by you.

Paramahamsaji: Life in the world and in the family is a stage where we develop our spiritual consciousness. In other words, I should say that this life is like a university or like a school. The circumstances in life created by your emotions, passions and desires teach something very important. When you relate with your life through emotions, passions and desires, then you begin to know more and more about life. By going through the process of passions, emotions and desires you know more about yourself and more about the reality of existence. Even if one is an out-and-out sensual person, still through that sensuality you know more about your life and existence.

The universe is an extension of yourself. We call it the microcosmos and the macrocosmos. The microcosmos is you and me and myself. The macrocosmos is the whole planet, the whole galaxy, the whole group of solar systems. The macrocosmos is measured in light years, but it can be fathomed in meditation. The macrocosmos and the microcosmos are identical. You are a miniature creation. You are a miniature universe.

I am not talking about a philosophy; I'm talking about a scientific truth. It is not just a myth. In modern physics they have done a lot of work on this. They have seen the behaviour in the universe and they have analyzed the

behaviour of electrons, protons and atoms. They have found that the behaviours are identical to each other: the sun, moon, planets and intra-molecular space have exactly the same pattern. Therefore, you are a miniature universe, which means that you have a sun, a moon, planets, constellations, space and galaxies. In order to understand the universe it is advised that you should try to understand yourself, but this understanding of the inner universe or microcosmic universe must be blended with the universal plan. This life is a part of the universal plan.

Suffering and grief, happiness and joy, failure, delay, loss and death, success and gain, name and fame, passions, emotions, greed, anger and violence, jealousy, hatred; they are part of the universal plan. You should not wish to live a life without these. You don't want death, you don't want grief, you don't want failure, hatred, greed, violence; you want love, happiness, prosperity, good health. You are accepting only half of the universe. That is why nobody is going further.

You go to God. What do you ask from him? Let my son die? You don't ask this. You can't think of the whole universe. The great energy, the supreme energy of the universe is manifesting itself in all forms. The energy is manifesting itself in the form of death and birth, anger and passion, hunger and thirst, greed and violence, compassion and charity. You have chosen only one part of it and you don't want the rest. Therefore, those people who search only for happiness, experience unhappiness. Those who don't want hatred, they get hatred. Those who want only love, they don't get it and those who hate death, they get only death.

Knowledge of the whole universe is very difficult to obtain. Within you is a very small point of experience. It is a luminous point which comes at the height of

meditation, like a steady star. It is not like a sunball. It is not like a fireball. It is so tiny that you have to see it with great attention. Sometimes it is there but you don't see it and you have to maintain your awareness on the point for a long time without missing it, then you enter into a state of knowledge of the universe.

This point which I am talking about is the nucleus. You know what the nucleus is? The nucleus is used to produce nuclear bombs. The centre of matter is the nucleus. The centre of consciousness is the nucleus. Therefore, in order to know the universe, you have to go to the centre of yourself, so you must try to find out where your centre is.

Q. What should I do in order to achieve peace of mind? I happen to be a lawyer and continually receive negative vibrations. Is my profession and the fact that I also have a family, an obstacle for my becoming your disciple?

Paramahamsaji: In order to acquire a greater amount of peace of mind and happiness in life, one has to discipline one's life. Discipline is not a rigour; it is not penance. According to one's situation, one should plan one's whole life. Some time should be devoted to the practices of yoga, some time should be devoted to your own profession, some time should be devoted to reflection and contemplation, and some time should be devoted to taking care of the family.

When you are able to make a proper program for your life, then you feel better, but at the same time you must remember that happiness and unhappiness keep coming to everybody in succession. Sometimes the experiences are objective and sometimes they are subjective. Therefore, it is necessary that one must live one's life with greater patience.

—Satsang at Satyananda Ashram, Kypseli, Athens,
4 May 1984



Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. In your life you had many opportunities, ways methods and systems to approach or to be 'That'. But please tell me, does there exist a way or any hope or grace to get there directly which is outside rules and outside words?

Paramahamsaji: Man is subjected to laws of evolution. The law of evolution is obligatory for each and every speck of this creation. Therefore, in order to reach the higher consciousness or higher stages of life, one has to fulfil necessary rules or conditions of evolution. For example, there is a certain law of gravity with human destiny. That is known as maya. It is a force which binds everybody to this lower existence. If you are not able to go beyond maya, then you have to remain bound to this lower existence.

In order to overcome the force of maya, you need an extra force in your life. This extra force is known as vidya or higher experience. When you throw a stone high up, it again comes down to the centre of gravity, but if you give speed to this stone, throw it

much higher than you did before, then it can penetrate much deeper into space. Similarly, in spiritual life there are certain elements which one has to adopt to overcome the gravitational force of maya.

Maya operates through the mind. When the mind is clogged by ignorance, maya has a greater effect on you. Most of us are full of avidya or ignorance, therefore this force of maya is able to influence us through our minds and we are not able to have the higher experience. With the help of the mind, maya imposes lower instincts on our life.

There are three things you must understand: instinct, intellect and intuition. Instinct controls animals. All animals behave, live and act through instinct. In human life there is a predominance of intellect, but at the same time we also have instincts. In our human incarnation, we are partly controlled by instincts and partly by intellect. However, by the practices of yoga you can directly operate through intuition. Higher human beings operate through intuition. Human beings operate through intellect. Animals operate through instinct.



What are the instincts? Acquiring food is one form of instinct; it is the instinct of self-preservation. Desire for progeny or the sexual act is another instinct in animals, necessary for propagation and pleasure. The third instinct is sleep, and the fourth instinct is fear or insecurity. These four instincts are predominant in every animal but animals do not know that they have them, because they do not have intellect.

Human beings also have these four instincts, but they also have intellect. If you want to make maya ineffective, it is necessary to transcend your instincts bit by bit. It is very difficult, I tell you, it is very difficult to transcend instinct, but if you want to go high you will have to do something, as the force of maya operates through the mind. Therefore, in spiritual life there are a few supporters. The first is the support of guru, the second is the support of satsang, the third support is swadhyaya or self-study.

Guru is the primary support. Satsang means association with good ideas. When you listen to good ideas, that helps you. You may not be able to put those good ideas into practice, but they will definitely inspire and help you. When you expose yourself to satsang, then you are improving the vibration of your personality, you are initiating into yourself a process of self-analysis. The third support is swadhyaya. Swadhyaya is a process of reading and studying books which relate to spiritual life. When you make a study of such books, you receive inspiration.

When you want to heat milk, you keep it near the fire. If the fire goes off, what will happen? The milk will go cold. If you want the milk to be heated, you will have to again put it on the fire. If you want to maintain the temperature of the milk, you'll have to maintain the temperature of the fire. In the same way, if you want to maintain your spiritual temperature, you will need these three types of support.



Q. How could we achieve humility? What is the quality of humility really? Could we have some examples?

Paramahansa: When the clouds are full of water they come closer to earth. When the trees are full of fruit the branches swing low. Those people who have outstanding qualities become humble, but those people who do not have those qualities, pose as though they have them. They become egoistic and arrogant. They make a show of their qualities. This is the tendency of most people.

In fact, if you analyze the whole affair psychologically, you will find that real humility comes through the understanding of one's negative personality. When we look within our own self impartially, when we try to judge ourselves impartially, then we see our qualities and see what we do not have. Therefore, in order to achieve humility, one has to judge one's own self mercilessly.

If one wants to succeed in this life and also in spiritual life, then one will have to see one's own personality

thoroughly. No man is perfect, and no man is united in himself. Everybody has a double personality, not only with others, but even with oneself.

Can you make a confession about yourself to yourself? No, you can't. You cannot confess about yourself to yourself because, first of all, you don't know about yourself. "I am a very good man," that's what you know. "I am a very wise man," that's all you know about yourself. "I am a very strong man; I am a very capable man," that's what you think about yourself.

When you fantasize, what do you fantasize? When you imagine or build castles in the air, what do you do? You become a great man, you become the richest man, you become the most powerful man, but do you know that is not yourself? You are just a limited human being and you have many traits of imperfection.

Even a boy who is in primary school should know his limitations. They are his intellectual limitations. He should not make fun of a professor who teaches at a university. This is precisely the reason we quarrel in the family. This is precisely the reason we quarrel in the marketplace, because you think you are right and I think I am right, but the fact is both are wrong. If one of us was right, the quarrel would not have started.

I will tell you a joke related to two drivers in Japan. The two drivers were driving in opposite directions. Suddenly, at a U-turn they collided with each other. It was not a great accident, but it happened. Both of them came from behind the steering wheel and greeted each other. One said, "I am sorry, it was my mistake." The other driver said, "No, not at all, it was my mistake." He said, "No, it was my mistake." That was their quarrel.

Now both of them had to report to the police. When they went to the police, one driver reported, "I made a mistake, I was on the wrong side and I collided with this car." The other

driver also put in the same type of report. The policeman said, "What am I going to do?" Then one of the drivers said, "You please tell me what fine I should pay?"

When there is understanding of oneself, then comes humility. Humility is not a cowardly nature. A coward also looks very humble, but humility is a very dynamic nature in man. It is not the nature of the western people. A western man will say, "Sorry" and then the other western man will say, "Sorry", but when they go to the court, their lawyers will attack each other and each one will defend





himself. That is the western way. That's not humility. That is the diplomacy of humility.

Humility means having a nature in which you try to understand your mistake in relation to the other person. We don't have to talk about Japanese drivers, let us talk about husband and wife, parents and children, the boss and the subordinate. It is a crisis in humility there. The wife is trying to say that the husband is wrong, and the husband is trying to prove that she is wrong. If they go to their mother-in-law and father-in-law, they are trying to press their own argument. What happens then, you know. The quarrel amplifies. If one of them would withdraw, it would be painful in the beginning, but at the end it would pay substantial rewards in the form of happiness in the

family, but the ego comes in between. Sometimes the thoughts of humility do come in the mind. At the heat of passion—nothing, but sometimes she thinks, or sometimes he thinks, "Ah, all unnecessary, I should not have done it." They know that this is not the way to happiness, but they do not tackle the problem through humility.

If one of them or both of them could search their own selves and try to find out their own contribution to the quarrel, then they would gain humility and understanding. Therefore, humility is dead. It is dead because of your hard ego. You have your personality problems, you are suffering from inferiority, or you have the feeling of superiority, or you see a certain mistake in your husband or wife, or you become careless about each other because too much intimacy breeds contempt.

There are definite ways of developing the virtue of humility. Start with your guru, because it is before the guru that you bow your head. You have to practise humility with someone first. You can practise humility with God, but with God there is no problem, because He is not there, you don't clash with him. With guru you come into a clash because he exists and he is going to crush your ego. He says, "Sit down." For some time you do what he says. After some time, you begin to raise your ego a little, because the ego does not want to be subdued by anybody. It is man's support in life. Therefore, in order to develop humility, you have to train your ego.

Q. What is guilt and what is fear and how can they be handled?

Paramahansa ji: Guilt and fear are linked with man's evolution. On account of ignorance of life, nature and its functions, you develop guilt and fear. Fear is a necessary form of evolution and so is guilt. Animals have no guilt, therefore they do not find any scope for evolution. It

is necessary to have some form of guilt. When there is too much guilt then it influences your behaviour and personality, but some amount of guilt is necessary for self-enquiry and evolution. In the same way, some amount of fear is also necessary.

There are many types of fear: fear of death, fear of disease, fear of being looted and robbed, fear of being criticized, fear of becoming ugly, fear of losing name and fame, fear of being defeated or suppressed. All these fears necessarily make you more capable and thoughtful. Therefore, fear should be considered a very important element in your evolution.

If I made you fearless today, you know what would happen? You would have an accident! You see, you have to understand the role of fear and guilt in the evolution of your consciousness, personality and life. Sometimes you suffer from extra guilt and sometimes you have a lot of phobias, you are afraid for no reason. Then that becomes an abnormal trait of your personality. Excessive fear and excessive guilt must be treated properly.

Excessive fear and guilt are reflected in your behaviour. Some people go to the bathroom every half an hour and wash their hands and face. Some people keep on using cosmetics the whole day. Some people secure their rooms with locks and latches many times more than is necessary. Many people feel this is dirty and that is dirty; I know people who apply soap in the bathroom five times and every time they rub the whole body, not because they want to look beautiful, but because they feel that there is so much dirt there. These symptoms prove that you are suffering from too much guilt and excessive fear, but it is very difficult for an ordinary person to know how much fear they have, and to draw a line of demarcation beyond which there shouldn't be any fear.

According to this philosophy, fear and guilt have come with man through incarnations, but then there are other

theories as well. When too much adrenalin is injected into the blood, the heart has to pump the blood very fast. When the heart is pumping the blood very fast then it pumps more into the brain also. On account of this physio-hormonal process, you feel a sort of anxiety and fear. So, in modern science they say that the hormonal imbalances cause these emotions in you and you should try to maintain a balance.

Religions have their own theories. In Christianity there is the concept of eternal sin. Hinduism, Islam, Mohammedanism, Judaism, these major religions have the concept of sin. The concept of guilt should be understood in the same context. All these religions directly and indirectly believe that this sin is associated with sexual relationships. In Hinduism this is not stated straightforwardly. In Christianity it is straightforward; the affairs between Adam and Eve are the concept of original sin. In the Hindu religion it is said indirectly. This is the view of religion. However, according to yoga, the definition is entirely different from this.

In yogic philosophy, fear and guilt come to everybody in the process of evolution. Just as a child has many behaviours according to his development, in the same way the spirit, the atman or the Self, through the course of evolution, develops many traits like fear and guilt, and finally sheds them. This means the guilt and fear will automatically go away the moment you make a transit through evolution. Just as a child is always playful, but when he makes a transition he completely forgets about his playfulness, automatically.

Therefore, one should not worry at all about guilt and fear, according to yoga, because they will remain with you as long as you are in the transit lounge. As soon as you make a departure from this particular state of your existence to the next one, fear and guilt will disappear by themselves.

Q. Why do I make the same mistakes a thousand times and why can I not avoid the same negative thoughts and the same negative emotions all the time, even though I can see that they are poisoning me?

Paramahansaji: Practise antar mouna. When you suppress your mind, then the same samskara or the same thought pattern comes to you again and again. Supposing you get angry. You don't like to be angry. You regret it so much. You hate it. You are sorry for it. This is called suppression. The same thing can be said about other negative tendencies.

Most of us have a very inimical approach to our negative tendencies. When evil thoughts come into your mind you don't like it. You are so sorry about it. You feel so bad about it. You can't accept it and don't want it any more. That is called suppression. Because of suppression, these negative thoughts come into your mind, not one thousand times but millions of times.

When a negative thought comes into your mind, let it come. Welcome it. If necessary, think it a little more, enjoy it. It will not come after some time. It will spend itself. It may come for a day, a month or a year, but ultimately it will be spent. The force will be spent completely. When you practise your mantra, you must see that all the thoughts in your mind do come. Do not stop them. You continue the chanting of your mantra. Don't stop the mantra, but let thoughts come and go. That is the only way.

Other ways are dangerous. You suppress them one thousand times, then they will not come. You will be very happy, but they will come now in the form of repressions. When they come to you in the form of repressions, you will never know about it; they come like thieves. They will come in the form of emotional breakdowns, they will come in the form of a strong suicidal complex. Therefore, in my

opinion, those who have the same negative thoughts a thousand times should practise antar mouna with mantra.

Please listen to me carefully. Sometimes people come to a meeting and they pass wind and the people who are sitting nearby close their nose. Many people pass wind, but some people pass very bad wind. Now, what are you going to do, use a cork? No, that is not the solution. Or some spray? That is not the solution. Or open the window? That is not the solution. The solution is: take him to shankhaprakshalana class the next morning. You should know what shankhaprakshalana is. You make him pass out everything which is the cause of that wind. In the

If one wants to succeed in this life and also in spiritual life, then one will have to see one's own personality thoroughly. No man is perfect, and no man is united in himself. Everybody has a duplicate personality, not only with others, but even with himself.

same way, when negative thoughts come into your mind, it means there is something undigested in your mind, some experience during childhood, some experience in your life. It is rotting there. You don't know about it, because when it got into you, you were only one year old or two years old.

When that thought, when that karma, when that influence got into your mind, you did not know, and you still won't be able to know it, because you do not allow the dirty, rotten matter to go out. When it is trying to come out, you stop it. When bad thoughts come into your mind, you suppress them. You have been doing it since your childhood. Your mother told you to do that. Your father, your teacher, your priest told you to do that: "Don't think bad thoughts." So you are suffering.

I say it differently. I tell even little children, "When bad thoughts come into your mind, let them come! For how long will they come? They will be spent one day." However, this is a very difficult proposition I am putting before you all, because we are religious people. We want to be one with divine thoughts. We do not want to face negative thoughts.

So, if you want my suggestion about your problem, you must practise 'mental shankhaprakshalana'. You know what mental shankhaprakshalana is? Make your mind purge out everything. Just as the body purges everything out in the toilet, in the same way, during your mantra you must purge out that mental stuff. Doing it day after day, week after week, month after month, one day you will find that it is getting less and less.

Q. How can one put into practice that which one believes is correct? How can one bridge the gap between thoughts and actions, so that there is no disagreement between them?



Paramahansaji: It is a very good idea to put into practice what you think, but if it became possible it would be terrible in the world, because many people think destructive things. Many people think good things as well, but nature has created a system or a law, and that is the gap between thought and action. This gap between thought and action is a blessing in disguise. I don't know about you, but I know about myself. If all my thoughts were put into action from the time I could think, by this time the whole world would have been destroyed ten times over. What about you? If you could put all your thoughts into action, what would happen to you?

First of all, we have to become a saint. First of all, we have to become a true yogi. First of all we should be established in wisdom and higher knowledge. When we have achieved that discipline, then this can become possible. Even then nature does not allow you. Never in history was a man born with a perfect parallel balance between thought and action. There will always be a gap between the two, but as you grow in wisdom, this gap will become shorter. So, you should not be disappointed about the reality of things.

I have spoken about it to so many people, because everywhere I go people talk about this: the gap between ideals and performance. Not only here, everywhere they say, "Why is there a gap between the ideals and performance?" My reply to them is very simple: even with this gap there are so many problems in the world; if this gap is bridged the world will become an impossible place to live in. If you were able to do what you are thinking! My God, no, no! Let nature rule this part of the law and we ordinary human beings must remain incompetent to some extent.

—Satsang at Satyananda Ashram, Kypseli, Athens,
4 May 1984

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. How do we distinguish between a guru who is real and one who is not?

Paramahamsaji: A very difficult question, because I have never met or known a non-real guru. Whatever man I have come across in my life, I have learned something from him. Like a honey bee I went to every flower and collected pollen. Therefore, you should be like a honey bee. Even as you are talking about a non-real guru, a guru can also come across a non-real chela. Sometimes disciples also are not real.

First of all, you must reflect upon yourself, then you must have association with wise people from time to time, then you must read quite a few books in order to improve the quality of your inspiration, then you must decide to have a guru. By this time the range of your consciousness should be wider and you will never get a guru who will frustrate your spiritual energy.

The Indian tradition is that a guru should not be chosen by virtue of his public speaking or propaganda. A guru should not be after interest, that's very important. Therefore, you must first equip yourself with the virtues of a disciple, then you will get a real guru. Still, I do not know. I have tried to think about this and I hear about it from here and there, but I have not come to a conclusion because I think something is lacking in both of them. It's like the husband seeing sex in the wife and the wife seeing sex in the husband; guru talking about a bad chela and a bad chela talking about a bad guru. Are you sincere about your spiritual aim? If you are sincere, even a non-real guru

can be your true guide. Whatever the quality of a guru is, he can cheat everybody except a sincere disciple.

Q. Can you please explain what is the meaning of mantra and what is the purpose and benefit of mantra?

Paramahamsaji: I have been replying to this question for the last thirty years hundreds of times. Sometimes I feel it is better if I don't talk about it. Why should people talk about the intricacy of mantra and why should they ask me what a mantra is if they already know? In every culture the importance of mantra is known to the people. Hindus know about mantra, the Jewish culture knows about mantra, Egyptians and Greeks know about mantra. In every part of the world we hear that mantras are being used in different places. The negative aspects of mantra are also known to the people. Many times people tell you, "He has thrown a charm on me."

You think you know about mantra, but anyway, since you have asked me the question, let me reply. Mantra is a Sanskrit word composed of two roots, one means 'repetition', the other means 'freedom'. 'Repetition and freedom' is the meaning of the word mantra. It should not be misunderstood or misinterpreted as 'divine name'. Mantra is a sound and sound is a form of energy, a powerful energy, which can influence the mind.

In order to experience meditation and samadhi, you need a certain type of mind. Those who practise meditation without preparing the mind do not have the right type of experience. When you meditate, the mind goes into the subconscious and unconscious plane and there it visualizes its own nature and its own contents. Therefore, before the practices of meditation, you should clean the mind. The sounds which I am talking about clean the mind of its impurities and impressions. In the human mind there are millions and billions and trillions

of impressions embedded. You have a great past hovering in your mind, not only of this incarnation but also of other incarnations. Before concentration, it is necessary to make the mind lighter by the practice of mantra. Therefore, when you practise mantra you should not try for concentration. Mantra does not mean concentration and concentration is not necessary. If you can make your consciousness clean, concentration is spontaneous.

Those people who have a mantra from their guru should listen to me carefully, because I am not an intellectual. I've been practising for over fifty years. When you practise your mantra, you should let your mind flow because your mind is filled with suppressions and agonies. Suppressing the tendencies of the mind will hinder your spiritual experience. When you take the mantra and practise it, you should just repeat it either verbally or mentally. If you experience turbulence and dissipation in the mind, let it be. You should be bold enough to just let it be and face yourself. You must face your own frustrations, ambitions, passions and everything else that the mind is, and for that purpose you must completely detach yourself from the wanderings of the mind. Even as you look at the television, in the same way you should look at the television of the mind.

Mantra should be practised in the way taught by your guru. There are thousands of sounds in the universe, but the universal sound is Om. Om represents time, space, object and transcendence. Apart from Om there are thousands of sounds in the universe existing at high frequencies. You cannot hear them now, but some people who raise the frequency of their own minds can hear those sounds. Those sounds which they hear are known as mantras.

There are many qualities and types of mantra, but they are generally classified into three: mantras which

have gross effects, mantras which have spiritual effects and mantras which have mundane effects. Then there is another categorization of mantra into two types: one is known as beeja or 'seed', the other is a combination of many sounds. These combinations of sounds are combinations of various frequencies. Each sound has a frequency, no two sounds have the same frequency. Aa is one sound, Ka is another sound, each has a different colour. No two sounds have the same colour.

There are certain sounds which, if combined, have great power. I must try to make it clear to you. Three or more sounds of low frequency, if properly combined, can attain high frequency. Therefore, you will find many mantras with more than one syllable. Om is monosyllabic, but other mantras are not monosyllabic. Besides Om only the beeja mantras like Klim, Aim, Hrim, Shreem are monosyllabic. These monosyllabic mantras are intended to purify the mind with greater speed.

So, when we talk about mantras we are talking about the sound energy in the universe. You have many kinds of energy: electrical energy, nuclear energy, and so on. In the same way, sound is also energy and it can transmit waves through space. A mantra is so powerful that it can create an effect within you and it can also create an effect on the objects in the universe.

When you receive a mantra from your guru, you are actually receiving a portion of energy from him in the seed or potential form. When you practise the mantra, if it does not give concentration it does not matter, because in the first stage, the mantra creates more explosions in the mind and then concentration comes by itself.

Mantra is the basis of yoga, mantra is the basis of tantra and mantra is the basis of spiritual life. Mantra can give contentment influence your character and personality. Mantra can bring about communication

between individuals on the astral plane. Mantra can influence the brain and the mental faculties of children.

Q. Can you tell us about yoga nidra?

Paramahamsaji: Yoga nidra is one of the most important practices derived from tantra. In the last thirty years, yoga nidra has become known throughout the world for spiritual perfection and therapy. It is not concentration; in fact, you should not concentrate in yoga nidra. It is a scientific practice. The different organs in the body are connected to different parts of the brain gyrus and when you think about the different parts of the body, then this stimulus is transferred to the higher centres.

During scientific experiments it has been seen that when you practise yoga nidra, alpha waves change immediately. If you practise yoga nidra for a period of about twenty minutes you will find changes taking place, in the respiration, in the brain waves, in the body temperature and the skin resistance. I have myself formulated a scientific research in India, aided by the Central Government, from 1968 to 1973. I taught yoga nidra to more than one thousand patients suffering from coronary diseases and I found that for people suffering from stress and strain, yoga nidra is the best. From 1968, psychologists in France were working on the yoga nidra practice I discovered, and it was taught to mental patients as well as children and housewives. It was found that the practice of yoga nidra is very important for people who are not able to concentrate their minds at all. For people suffering from nervous breakdown, who are not able to handle the mind for even one minute, yoga nidra is the best. Later, when I wrote a scientific treatise on yoga nidra, it was translated into every language of the world and medical authorities all over the world now refer to that book.

Q. How can we find God inside us?

Paramahamsaji: God is inside, God is outside and God is in your bones. In order to find God, it is necessary for everybody to sit down quietly every day within themselves. Then they should transform their philosophy of life, transform the purpose of their incarnation, understand the relationship they have with everybody, and reflect upon the relationship between this external body and the inner being.

It is said that by true bhakti you can realize God, see God within you, but sometimes I find bhakti very difficult because we are emotionally bankrupt. All the emotion, all the devotion, all the love is squandered. You have the objects of the world which are so fanciful. You cry and scream and shout for these things which are so brief in life. Find out who you love day in and day out. Please find out how much love you can give to God. Do you love God as much as you love your son? Do you love God as much as you love your girlfriend? Do you feel for God or remember Him as much as you remember your bank balance? I can give you thousands of examples from your life where you have failed to spare even a little love for Him.

Our love for God is intellectual. Our love for the things of this world is actual. Why don't you change the picture? So hard! So hard! Let your love for the world become intellectual. Can you intellectually love your wife and husband? Can you have intellectual love for your children? Can you have intellectual love for your bank balance and property and poverty? If you can, it will take the twinkling of an eye to get that experience. Otherwise, no matter how much I talk of religion, nothing will happen.

Once a disciple asked his guru, "How can I see God within?" Guru replied, "Why don't you cry out for Him?" The next day the disciple went to the sanctum sanctorum

and started crying, “God I want you, I want you.” He went on waiting and watching. The guru said, “Good drama, my child”, and took the disciple on a journey. The guru and the disciple were travelling by boat. When the boat was halfway across the river he dropped the disciple into the water. The disciple started crying and screaming and waving, “Oh, help!” The guru said, “Come on, come out. Have you ever cried like that for God?”

The disciple understood, but you can do it better. You can do these things for the one you love, but how to love that formless God? Whether he’s white or black or brown or yellow, nobody knows. The guru tells us that He has all those symptoms, the books say He is very different, but still the experience does not come. Therefore, it is better that everybody should try and awaken the Self. This is the prime purpose of our incarnation on this planet. To eat, sleep, seek security, to have sensual pleasure, these are meant for animals. Man stands out by one virtue: his capacity to experience God. Therefore, the moment he becomes aware he must think, “How can I see God in myself?” Then he should devote himself to the attainment of that experience.

Q. How does your mission compare with Swami Sivananda’s mission?

Paramahansaaji: I think I should let you know who Swami Sivananda was. Swami Sivananda was born in India in 1887. After graduating as a medical doctor he became a swami. He did great sadhana. He attained high illumination. He was one of the greatest enlightened persons I have ever seen. I went to him in 1943. Before that I had met practically every guru, but when I found him in 1943, I received the light.

I lived with him up to 1956 and it was a time about which I can say nothing; it was fantastic. I feel proud that

I was born and lived with him. Many times I read about Christ. I never believed that such a man could live at all. Compassion, love, consideration for others are difficult things to find, they are not intellectual things, they are born out of the human self. In Swami Sivananda I felt there was a man who could see the whole of humanity as part of his own guru. He had no attachments, yet he loved everybody. He was large-hearted, yet he was disciplined and his life was a constant sacrifice.

Anyone who came to him for anything, he gave it. He was very powerful. Thousands came to him for relief from sickness, yet he never directed a drama. He would never say, “Okay child, you will be all right, get out, I’ve met you”, never. He would listen very carefully and would say, “I will pray for your health, and by the grace of God, I’m sure you’ll be all right.” He healed millions but he never claimed it.

At the end of his life, just before leaving the body, he wrote two sentences. His disciples at the time of death asked him, “What is your message to humanity?” He did not speak, he took a pen and wrote down, “God prays with you, everything else is unimportant.” It was his last message to mankind.

In this short period it is not possible for me to tell you all about him because I don’t like to talk a lot about my guru. Well, I love him, that is my business. You must have your own guru; you must have the same feeling for him.

In 1956, on the morning of 19th March, he called me to his cottage and told me that the institution was not enough to hold me; I must go away, into the wild world to do what I can, see, and understand. He gave me some money and taught me kriya yoga in five minutes and I left him on the 19th March 1956. You know, he made things very clear to me. He said, “In 1923 you were born, in 1943 you came to me, in 1963 you’ll start working yourself, in 1983 your institution will come to a close

and after that your work will be for the cosmos.” I am working by his instructions.

My philosophy is different from his, because I can’t teach what he did. I will teach what I think best; his philosophy is very difficult: “Love all.” How to love? “Surrender yourself to God.” How to do it? “Don’t have ego.” How not to have it? “Sacrifice everything to others.” I don’t know how to do it. Intellectually I understand everything, but I can’t practise love, I can’t practise compassion. I’ve tried and tried, and failed. Then I lost belief in that. I can practise yoga. I can withdraw myself completely, I can stop my mind and my breath, but I can’t practise love, I can’t practise compassion, I’m not selfless. I will teach what I can do. And he said, “After 1983.”

Only a person who has realized himself completely can be compassionate. When you dissolve your little ego in that cosmic ego, then you realize the Self, and not before that. Even if you can stop your mind, still it is not realization. Even if you can stop your breath, this is not self-realization. Even if you can transcend time and space and object, still it is not realization. A man of self-realization can live beautifully in this beautiful world of great varieties. When I get it I will come back to you so you can meet that man. I’m going to come, because my guru told me, “1983.” Afterwards my mind will become cosmic: this is intuitive vision.

Teach yoga, heal everyone, help them. When one realizes the Self, everything happens. Self-realization does not come by your own efforts. Grace of God and grace of guru are behind it. If you want it, it can happen here and now. If He doesn’t want it, no asana, pranayama, yoga, nothing can give you self-realization. Where is the Self? Not in the past. It is here and now, nearer than your own breath, closer than your own mind.

—Satsang at Hotel Holiday Inn, Athens, 4 May 1984

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. Should truth always be spoken?

Paramahamsaji: Some people say truth should be spoken at any time, at all costs, with everybody, but I have certain amendments to make. You should be truthful to God. You should be truthful to your guru. You should be truthful to your virtuous and righteous parents and to your loyal and trusted friend, but you should withhold the truth from one who is vicious and unrighteous, dishonest, hypocritical and untrustworthy. The practice of truth is bilateral and not unilateral. That is, the practice of truth should be when both parties are functioning on the same level, because truth is a virtue, truth is a dharma, truth is very tender, and many people who are not virtuous misuse this quality.

I will give you an example. Supposing four bad people are chasing a girl to rape her and she happens to pass through your house and after her these four people come to chase her. Will you tell the truth to them? If you tell the truth, you are patronizing adharma, unrighteousness. If you tell the truth you are helping the vicious, monstrous and devilish nature in these people.

When you tell the truth you must know that it is not harming anybody. When you speak the truth and it harms somebody, then it is not truth. According to raja yoga, satya and ahimsa, truth and non-violence, must go together. Many times we take pride in the truth and we speak the truth without any consideration. We speak the truth just because we have to speak it and that creates misunderstanding, destroys the career of many people and brings danger to the people. No, that is not truth.



Truth is an eternal virtue. There is no question of challenging the greatness of truth, but when you speak the truth, it should be pleasant. If it is unpleasant you should not speak it. This is what I personally think about truth.

Q. If one does not express the truth, maybe it is a mistake, as satanic forces can overtake another person if you do not express the truth to him.

Paramahamsaji: Yes, that is what I said, that when you speak the truth, you must speak in such a way that it patronizes dharma and not adharma. I will make it clearer. When you speak the truth you must see that it does not destroy dharma, but if your truth destroys adharma it is

okay. Your truth should be helpful in destroying injustice, viciousness and unrighteousness, but you must see that you are sure about it.

Sometimes we can have prejudices. You think that it will be injustice but it may not be, because it is very difficult to decide what is dharma and what is adharma. A lot of definitions have been given by religions throughout the world. What is dharma for me may not be dharma for you. The righteousness, the virtue, the dharma is different according to culture, religion and the people, therefore it is necessary to see that law and order is not broken by speaking the truth.

Q. Is truth not God?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, of course.

Q. Can you speak to us about freedom of will?

Paramahamsaji: Just as every tree produces seeds, in the same way, every action you do produces an effect and that is retained or stored in your mind in seed form. These seeds are known by various names. Some call them karma or samskara, some call them archetypes or latent impressions, but it is all the same. Happiness and unhappiness, good life and bad life, prosperity and poverty, disease or health; every experience creates an effect. This effect is converted into a seed and these seeds are in the form of vibration.

When my voice is recorded in the tape recorder it has an electronic shape. In the same way, every experience which you go through in life is also recorded, because there is a recording system in life. This recording system is known as the witnessing self. It records each and every experience, both objective and subjective. These effects, samskaras or seeds, germinate in you for some period, according to their own rules and at the proper time a

particular seed will fructify, thus creating your destiny, affecting your life, body and mind. Therefore, this life is an effect of your past karma.

It is not so only with you, but with everything. A flower tree grows, flowers bloom, seeds are created, then they are scattered everywhere. They remain inside the earth for some time and in the proper season, when there is heat, air, water and nitrogen, then they grow.

Some seeds are destroyed, some seeds are impotent but most seeds have potential; they will grow. They will remain in hibernation in the earth for one, two, or even three years, and then they will germinate. These seeds are indestructible. Not only with the flowers, trees and plants, but with everything in this universe, there is a law called the law of cause and effect.

The law of cause and effect can also be called the law of action and reaction. You hit a tin plate, it produces a sound. You hit a piece of wood, it produces a sound. You love somebody, he will react. You hate somebody, she will react. You help somebody, he will react. The relationship between action and reaction is equal and opposite. You create action, there will be a reaction; only the action of an enlightened person, one who has gone beyond matter, has no reaction. A jnani who has gone beyond matter, his actions do not breed reaction, but the action of everybody in this creation creates a reaction.

This is the eternal law. This is not my law. You may not like it, but it is the truth. This is the law of karma. We do not see it because we have no time to see it, but if you analyze yourself you must accept that you are a product of something. You are not just born. Your body is the result of union between two forces. You are not immaculate. Nobody is immaculate. You are a product.

Even as your body is a product, your mind should also be a product. How can you say that your body is the



product of two forces and your mind is independent? The way you think, feel and imagine, the way you act in your family, the way you move, is the product of some cause. Man's life on this planet is a link in a great chain. This is the truth, but at the same time nature has given man one small spark. This little spark is called independent will. In yoga this is called purushartha, the power of the spirit. Everyone has it in seed form. It was born with us, but we are not able to utilize it.

In order to utilize this power of the will, you must have a strong mind. The power of the will does not operate in

most people. We live the lives of circumstance. Nature kicks us like a football and we keep on being tossed from this end of the field to that end of the field. In order to develop the power of will, there are many things that you will have to accomplish. First of all, you will have to learn how to control the impulses of your mind, you will have to learn how to discipline the body-mind relationship, and you will have to learn how to focus the energies of the mind.

You will have to learn how to stop the dissipations of the mind. Can you stop your mind for a second? Can you focus your mind for a minute? Can you stop your mind

for some time? If you can, then your willpower will come into operation. But I can tell you one thing: man can develop his willpower, he can make some amendments in the destiny of his life, but as long as you are in the human body, you cannot completely escape destiny. You may be a great yogi, you may be a perfected siddha, you may even be an incarnation of divinity. You may be an avatara, a messiah or a prophet, but you still cannot totally override destiny.

We have seen the history of the past. Even prophets and saints, when they were born, were under the control of destiny to some extent. Therefore, let us develop our willpower as much as possible and help matters to become a little better, but do not think of completely escaping destiny. In order to escape destiny you will have to become the master of nature. If you manage to escape destiny, it will create a crisis in the realm of nature.

Q. Why does the universal, perfect and infinite mind manifest in the material world that is not perfect and why do we strive to conquer that which we always used to have?

Paramahansaaji: I do not know the answer to this question. Why all this? I do not know. Why should there be manifestation of life? Why should perfect become imperfect and why again should the imperfect try to become perfect? Why does the all-knowing become ignorant? I think the question and the answer are both transcendental.

I have thought a lot about it. I have read a lot about it. I have read the definitions of philosophies and religions, but these replies have not convinced me. Therefore, I am expressing my regret that I will not be able to answer this question. I do not know the reply.



Q. What is the psychology of a woman who, even though she is devoted to her husband, still goes with many other men? How can she cope with it when her husband has no understanding for this?

Paramahansa ji: I have never thought about this. I am basically a teacher of yoga. There are many social currents throughout the world and I have studied all of them. Some cultures believe in monogamy, polygamy, or polyandry. Everyone has been practising it under the cover of religion, and everybody says that this is the order of God.

In the Hindu religion, husband and wife cannot go elsewhere. That is considered to be the highest virtue. Their books talk about it day and night: husband to wife, wife to husband. Absolute chastity and virginity before marriage, no possibility of divorce, but in other religions divorce is possible.

When religion accepts divorce, then they should accept everything. You cannot talk about loyalty and divorce at the same time. After divorce she is not going to be all alone or he is not going to be all alone. It will just be disaster for the mind because, for emotional support, more than sexual support, two people need each other. Not only for emotional and sexual support, even for family purposes, they have to be with each other.

In the Hindu society, for a healthy, strong family and a good life, it is one to one, but if she is not able to propagate, then it has to be decided whether another girl has to come into the picture, not otherwise. It also says that the marital rights of men and women should be the same. Therefore, I find many contradictions. I say that even if she is not able to propagate, she is your wife, she alone is your wife. Just for the excuse of propagation you cannot bring another one. Or just because you may be impotent, she cannot have another one. So, I see contradictions in these religions. Under the excuse of propagation, under



the excuse of divorce, everything is all right; this means religion is accepting it. They do not say it, but it is implied. They say, "Don't do it", but the way it has been organized, you have no other choice.

Of course I am not an authority because I have not studied this subject and at the same time I do not want to get involved in your personal affairs. People have their own way of life. Arabic people have their own, Europeans, Africans and Hindus have their own styles. I mean, what am I going to teach you? So it is better I keep quiet.

Q. How can we get rid of attachment?

Paramahansaji: It is not necessary to get rid of attachment. Attachment is necessary for evolution and even if you want to get rid of attachment, you will never be able to do it. You may break your attachments with a person or with a place, but attachment continues in the mind in some form or the other. Love is attachment, but hatred is also attachment. Therefore, according to the science of yoga, instead of getting rid of attachment you should try to get rid of identification. Pain and unhappiness originate from identification and this identification is a quality of the mind.

It is necessary for everyone to understand that relationships, association and attachment are necessary for your mental growth. Animals have no attachment and they have no particular association. They have progeny, they have sexual mating, but then it is soon forgotten. It is only with human beings that you find there is a philosophy of relationship and attachment. With the higher, or superior types of human society, you find that there are definite philosophies of relationship and attachment. Those human societies where there is no particular philosophy of relationship and attachment are inferior types of society.



I see another danger when you try to get rid of attachment. Supposing a husband is not attached to his wife or a wife is not attached to her husband, there is definitely going to be an emotional, social crisis and there will be serious insecurity. The husband has attachment for the wife so he has security, she has attachment for him so she has security. Security is so important for the human mind. If you become insecure in your family you will have mental problems, you will have emotional crises.

Do you understand how important security is? The basis of security is attachment. In India the philosophy of relationship is over-exercised; in European society the philosophy of relationship is weak and flimsy. I am not

talking about the Greek people, but about Europeans in general; their attachment for each other is very fragile. Therefore, there are unbelievable mental problems in European cultures and civilization. There are an unbelievable number of suicides and divorces, although the Christian society in Europe is a monogamous society. Christianity believes in monogamy, it does not believe in polygamy or polyandry, but is there monogamy in the West? No, because the philosophy of relationship and attachment is very weak and fragile. In India we believe in the proper functioning of attachment and relationship.

This proper functioning of relationship is not only necessary for society, but for the individual. When a child is born, you are happy, therefore it is necessary that you have an attachment for him and he must have attachment for you. If you and your child are not attached to each other then there will be a process of disintegration. Disintegration can take place between mother and child, between husband and wife, and it causes crises in society and a crisis in one's mind. How can such a person meditate? How can such a person attain samadhi? European society is going through a process of disintegration and that is precisely the reason why Europe has a good religion, a prosperous society, but they have not produced even one guru. Even two thousand years ago they had to import a guru from Israel; Christ was not European and he was not Christian.

I am especially dealing with this question because I do not believe that for spiritual life we should destroy the philosophy of attachment. If my attachment with my disciples is not strong, then nothing can happen, nothing can function. There is a relationship between guru and disciple, there are rules and regulations guiding that, and there is a limit to how much we have to be attached to each other.

Apart from human beings, you have attachment to objects, to your job, money, property, house and car, radio, television and many things that you have. If you have no philosophy of relationship between yourself and the objects, then everything will disintegrate. If you have a dog in your house, keep a television and radio in his room and see what he does. He does not understand the philosophy of relationship; it is the human being who understands that philosophy of everything that is related to him. There is also attachment to and relationship with a philosophy and religion in human beings.

All of you must understand that attachment is a necessary element of human life. However, besides attachment, there is one thing called identification. I will give you a brief example of this from my experience. I had a servant and he used to work in the ashram for eleven months of the year. He used to go home only for one month. In the ashram, he used to work from dawn until late at night and he worked with great attachment for everyone. One day, he received a letter from his family that his wife was seriously ill. This news disturbed him very much. He could not wait even for one day, but went straight back to his village. Now just try to understand. He is working with me for eleven months and trying to serve me in the ashram, but his identification with his family affairs is much more serious. Therefore, try to get rid of identification and not attachments. All yoga aspirants must have a philosophy of relationships and attachment, and then you will grow.

There is a very high state in spiritual life. I do not know how long it will take for you to be there. There, one has no attachment, no sorrow and no happiness, no husband and wife, no guru and disciple, nothing, but that is a very high one, and that person does not try for it. As he grows in spirit, mind and knowledge, it



comes to him automatically. Therefore, you must have a positive philosophy, a positive approach, or positive ideas of attachment and relationships. Do not destroy these things. I am repeating, do not destroy these things. When you become enlightened, everything will happen by itself.

Q. Can you tell us about the meaning and purpose of karma sannyasa? When is one considered to be ready, and what are the requirements?

Paramahansaji: The life of a householder should be a means for the attainment of higher experience. Therefore, anything a householder thinks and does should be for the fulfilment of this purpose. Generally it is not practised.

Most people who are householders are not aware of this fact. People don't even know what the purpose or aim of the life of a householder should be. They feel that the purpose of work is to earn money and enjoy it and that the purpose of family life is to have sexual gratification. Therefore, they live a very undisciplined life. Most householders are like a ship without a rudder and an anchor, and that is why they are unhappy. Unhappiness is not due to tragedy or poverty. Unhappiness is there because we have lost the purpose in life.

In India, in the ancient days, they had divided the whole of life into four sections. Each section was of a period of twenty-five years approximately. Twenty-five years of the life of knowledge, brahmacharya, celibacy; twenty-five years of responsibility and action, growth of mind and character; twenty-five years of spiritual life as a householder; twenty-five years as a sannyasin, nothing to do with the life of a householder. These four orders of twenty-five years were known as ashrama, not yoga ashram, but ashrama.

Ashram does not mean a monastery; ashram means a place where you make a lot of effort for material and spiritual gain. The word ashram means labour or hard work. Ashram is a place where you have to put in very hard work for a different purpose. Therefore, the first twenty-five years for the acquirement of knowledge and the life of celibacy was known as brahmacharya ashrama.

The second period of twenty-five years, when you become a householder, you have to put in another type of hard work. You have to face responsibilities and obligations, work out your passions, emotions, desires, experience pain and happiness, and you have to learn how to balance yourself. You have to confront the tragedies and comedies in your life, face hatred, jealousy, and then you have to grow in mind and character. You

have to acquire a balance. You have to understand the laws of higher nature and then you learn inner discipline, understanding, balance of mind, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, contentment, humility, generosity, so on and so forth.

With these qualities you then gradually shift to spiritual life as a householder with your wife and children. You devote your life to the practices of yoga. You try to disidentify yourself from the events of life, to develop a type of dispassion, and then you start meditation and try to discover the Self within you.

After this, the fourth order of twenty-five years. If you are still alive, you can take sannyasa, have no relationship with anyone, no attachment, no connections, no personal money, no personal emotions, no personal wealth, no personal aims. You are free from all bondage. This is how you go into the life of spiritual experience.

There are two types of sannyasa. One is absolute sannyasa, about which I have just made a brief mention. There is another type of sannyasa which is for wise householders. Those householders who want to be householders, but at the same time want to rise high in spiritual life, for them is karma sannyasa. So there are two types of renunciation. One is the renunciation of objects, events and persons. In that renunciation you renounce your family, your property, your place and your relationships, but everybody cannot do it and should not do it. It is meant only for a few people. It is meant for a few brave humans.

There is another type of renunciation. That is not the renunciation of action, not the renunciation of person, not the renunciation of association, but renunciation of the fruit and outcome of the action. You don't have to renounce the karma, but there is some fruit accruing from the karma. That result affects you. That makes you



happy or unhappy. That causes imbalance in your mental and emotional life. You will have to disidentify yourself from the consequences of the actions in which you are involved. This is the ideal of a householder who wants to live the life of a karma sannyasin.

A karma sannyasin is a householder who is trying to experience inner experience as a householder. He does not make any external changes in his life, but he becomes aware within himself about his relationship with everything. Karma sannyasa is a kind of initiation. Just as you have mantra initiation or sannyasa initiation, in the same way you have initiation into karma sannyasa. A householder, whether a man or a woman, married or unmarried, young or old, can approach a guru in whom they have trust for karma sannyasa. In the life of a karma sannyasin, guru is the most important factor. In this mysterious spiritual life, you definitely need a guide with some sort of experience in it.

The guru's intimation to his disciple is that he should maintain the ideals of a householder and that a householder must be proud that he is a householder. Side by side with seeking happiness, he should also seek his inner self. Why should you always search for external happiness? I am not against it, but always, all the time and everywhere, in every situation you are only searching for happiness of the mind and the senses, and you don't get it. If you get it, it's all right, you go on, but you don't get it. How can you get it when you have lost the act of balance?

Just as sleep balances daily actions, hunger balances a good feast. After walking ten or twenty miles, if you sit down, that is a good balance; seasons balance each other, summer and winter. In the same way, in life also there has to be some balance. All the time you are searching for external happiness. All the time you are looking only outside, you are chasing the shadow. All the time you want

happiness from people and events, you want happiness from external things, but if you try to look within yourself, at least for some time in your life, there will be balance.

The spiritual experience, or the path of yoga, the path of meditation, balances your external and personal happiness. A person who meditates each day has a better quality of happiness in life. A person who sits for one hour quietly and calmly practising mantra, practising yoga and meditation, gets better happiness from events and from everybody.

Happiness is related through the senses to the mind. The five indriyas, senses, carry the sensation of happiness to the mind. Pleasure and pain are experienced by the mind through the medium of these five senses. In fact, there are ten senses. Five are motor nerves, known as karmendriyas, senses for automotion. Five are the sensorial nervous system, known as the jnanendriyas through which you receive the sensations into the mind. The five jnanendriyas are the eyes, ears, tongue, nose and skin.

Through these five senses the experience of pleasure and pain is transmitted, conducted or communicated to the mind, then an experience takes place, which means the mind is dependent on sense experience. If your senses carry unpleasant sensations to the mind, can your mind experience pleasure? All the objects in the world, all the people in the world, all the events in the world, are dualistic in nature. That is to say, the positive sensation and the negative sensation both accrue from an object, but if you do not depend on external sensations or the senses, then you look within yourself in meditation.

If you are able to go deeper into yourself, then you will come across an experience of immortal and enduring bliss. The experience of the Self is called ananda, which is neither pain nor pleasure. It is a state of balance. It is





not felicity, it is not gaiety, it is not a sort of joy, it has no excitement, it has perfect depth. That state is called ananda and the experience which you get from external objects, people and events, is called pleasure and pain. If you are expecting only pleasure from external life, then you are expecting a Utopia. Therefore, a householder, as a karma sannyasin, must search for the ananda, for that inner balance, within himself. At the same time, he should try to maintain a balance in external life during the experience of pleasure and pain.

When the householder is not satisfied with his present way of life, then he can think about taking karma sannyasa. After karma sannyasa, he takes a voluntary vow to look into himself. If you can quieten your mind for some time every day, the experience will be indescribable. You can just imagine, when you take a little bit of whisky and

champagne, how nice you feel; remember, when you sleep for five or six or seven hours every night, how nice you feel in the morning. Even these external things are able to give you so much rest, so much relaxation and so much comfort in a short time and for a short time. How much more would your happiness be if you knew how to establish yourself within yourself?

I have prepared a manual for karma sannyasins. It is now available only in English. Those who want the book in English should write to the ashrams in India or Australia, but if you want it in Greek, then the ashram should translate that book and make it available to all householders.

Q. What is ego? How does ashram life work in relation to ego?

Paramahansa: In philosophical terminology, ego is used in two different contexts. Firstly, it means the basis of individuality, the feeling of 'I', the feeling of your existence. This philosophical ego is present during very deep sleep. In dream this ego uses subjective material for experience. In the waking state this ego uses objective material for experience. The normal experience in waking, dreaming and deep sleep are related to ego. You can say that the ego is responsible for every empirical experience. If the ego is withdrawn, there is no empirical experience.

This ego is known in philosophy as the notion of 'I', it is also known as the little self. In fact, all your experiences in every state of mind are dependent on the ego. Through the practices of yoga, when the ego is withdrawn, then there is no empirical experience. The enlightened people do not function through the ego.

In philosophy two elements are known: ego and the Self. Self means atma, higher spirit or supermind. It is very difficult for me to give a name to that Self. Many times

Socrates used this term. When he said, "Know thyself", he meant the cosmic or higher Self. In other philosophical texts they have used different terms for this. Now, for convenience, I use the phrases 'lower empirical self' and 'transcendental Self'. To understand this better, you can use another terminology: lower ego and superego. The lower ego is responsible for all empirical and worldly experiences. The higher ego or the superego is responsible for enlightenment or higher knowledge.

This is about the philosophical ego, but there is another form of ego which is used more or less in the moral sense. You might say, "Oh, this man has too much ego." Here, ego means pride, the man thinks too much of himself. This ego is the moral quality in man. For spiritual life you have to transcend this ego. The ego is also responsible for the conflict inside you and in your family. When you have a fat ego, you are not ready to understand the other party. When you have a fat ego, you think that everybody is an idiot and you are the wise man. Therefore, not only for spiritual purposes, but also for day-to-day life, the ego is a great obstacle.

Not only in individual life but in social and national life also, the ego is very dangerous. Many nations that had fat egos ultimately perished. Many leaders with fat egos perished. The ego does help you for a short time. When you become egoistic, you go on threatening people. You go on threatening your children or your wife, your uncle or your father, or someone else, and everybody is scared of you for some time, but everybody is looking for an opportunity to put you down. They keep quiet for some time, but everybody is waiting for the right opportunity and when that comes, they give you a kick and push you out.

That is in the context of family and society. However, we are concerned about our spiritual life. When the ego

is fat, it becomes very difficult to penetrate through the mind. An egoistic person has a hard shell over his mind and finds it very difficult to meditate. Therefore, in order to overcome the mind, you must find the right method.

One should develop humility, one should develop kindness, understanding, mercy and compassion. You must feel friendliness with a person who is happy, you must feel pain when a person is suffering, and you must be very happy when a person is doing something good; you should have an understanding for a person who is not going the right way. These are the qualifications, the qualities, which you have to develop in order to erase your ego.

In the ashram life, guru is the person with whom humility, dedication and surrender are practised. The first and foremost quality of a disciple is humility and egolessness. Whether the disciple is a renunciate or a householder, in both cases, egolessness before the guru is essential. First you practise egolessness before your guru and when you practise this for some time, it becomes your nature. When it becomes your nature, you can practise it with anybody and everybody.

In India, there is an ancient tradition and even today it is fully practised. When the disciple goes to his guru, he carries three things: a flower, a coconut, and money. They are symbolic. A flower is the most tender thing in the world. There is nothing more tender, nothing more beautiful than a flower in this world. Everybody loves a flower, nobody hates it. When you offer a flower to your guru, you are offering your heart, because the heart is also most tender. It is responsible for life. If the heart fails, you die. This heart receives love and hatred. This heart receives the shocks and joys. The flower is the replica of the heart of the disciple, and when he offers it to the guru, it means that he is offering his heart, his emotions, his feelings. He is offering everything which the heart represents.

The second thing which he offers is a coconut. The coconut has a very hard shell outside, but inside there is a very soft kernel. It is white stuff, like butter. The coconut represents the ego. When you are offering a coconut to your guru, you are offering your head. 'Head' does not mean the brain. When you say head, you mean the ego. "Oh, his head is very hard!" This indicates the ego is very hard. Inside the ego, there is soft stuff. So, the disciple goes to the guru, who takes the coconut and breaks it. This is a ritual. It means that when you go to the guru, you must break your ego.

The third thing is money. Nowadays, many people find gold and silver very difficult, so they give banknotes. Money in yoga is called mudra. Mudra here means the mood of attachment. Most people are attached to money. They work for it, they even steal it, they murder their own beloved ones and they throw away their wife and children for the sake of money. They become merciless for the sake of money.

Money is a very important factor so far as the life of the ego is concerned. The attachment to money is like a life-saving, important vitamin to the ego. Therefore, they offer money to the guru. It symbolizes their surrender of attachment.

In India this tradition is still alive. If I go to the house of my disciple and ask him or her for any amount of money, they won't refuse it. Of course, I never do it, because the guru also has certain duties, certain responsibilities and certain morals. I have to just write a small letter, "Send me five thousand rupees." And it comes, because the relationship between guru and disciple is based on higher factors. It's not like father and son, it's not like husband and wife, it's not like brother and sister. It is like God and devotee.

If God came to you in the night and said, "Give me all the bank cheques." Would you do it or not? Of course, if

you believe He is God you will do it. Or if God came to me in the night and said, "Get away from here, jump in the ocean and die," I would do it because I believe in Him. So, egolessness must be started with the guru. Of course, you must be sure that he too has his moral standards. If the disciple becomes egoless, then the guru can use him to the maximum. Even though the disciple has surrendered, the guru should not exploit him. The guru has to be beyond matter, he should not expect any material thing from his disciple.

God does not need any material thing from you. Of course, you give everything to Him. You offer your heart, you offer your head, you offer your money, you offer your children, but He doesn't want it. God only wants one thing from you: bhakti. You understand what bhakti is? Your pure emotion, pure devotion, not in prayers, not in rituals, not even singing his glories. Even as you love your child, even as you love your beautiful girl, even as you are attached to your property and other things, that emotion, only that emotion, He wants.

It is the same with the guru. He doesn't want your head, he doesn't want your flowers, he doesn't want your money, but you should give it because you need to. Why? To get rid of the ego. Those who want spiritual life will have to solve this riddle of the ego. First you have to solve it on a day-to-day basis, then you will have to solve this on a higher spiritual basis. In nirvana there is no ego. In samadhi there is no ego. When there is no ego, the vision takes place. When there is no ego, then the divine or higher or supreme vision takes place, not at all before that.

Q. Is devotion a necessary requirement in spiritual life? How can devotion be developed?

Paramahansa ji: Devotion is developed gradually in the human incarnation. Throughout the evolution of the soul,

a gradual training is imparted to you to develop devotion. How do you make a pot? First you collect the proper earth, then you mould it, you give it a shape on a revolving wheel, then it is to be baked, glazed and painted and the pot is ready. In the same way, first you have to develop emotion and attachment. You must develop love and attachment for various people. After you have developed love and attachment for the people in this world, then you should transform it or channel it. There are two channels for emotion. One is called the empirical channel, the other is called the spiritual channel.

In the spiritual channel, first of all you must have satsang, you hear the stories of the saints, that is the first step to devotion. Then you have association with saints, that is the second step to devotion. Then you find a guru for yourself, that is the third step to devotion. Finally, when your devotion has reached a climax, then you have devotion to God. Devotion, therefore, should be developed step by step.

Many times we think of devotion to God. We express our feelings, but it is all intellectual, because that devotion does not help you to transcend the mind. When true devotion dawns in the mind, at once you lose the lower self. If you are anaesthetized, you lose consciousness of touch, but if you have taken an anaesthetic and you have not lost consciousness, it means there was something wrong with the anaesthetic. In the same way, when you express your devotion to God, but you do not transcend the mind, it means it was not true. Bhakti, or devotion to God, is so powerful that if it comes into your mind for even a split second, you forget your wife, children, everything.

We have heard about the life of saints. At the height of bhakti they completely lost their personal ego. There was a saint in the Middle-East. His name was Mansur. He was a great devotee of God, but the people were not

happy with him, so he was brought for execution. His skin was peeled, like you peel the skin of a potato, but still he had no pain. He was only repeating the name of truth. He was intoxicated.

The intoxication of bhakti is such an intoxication! You can't even understand it. Our prayers are ritualistic. Our devotion or feeling is also superficial. Now, remember one thing: just as the passion for a man and a girl makes you transcend the ego, devotion should also make you transcend the ego. A saint questioned, "Do you love God as much as you love your beautiful maiden?" The disciple blinked.

There is a beautiful story. About four hundred years ago, there was a man in India. He married a young girl. One day his wife went to her parent's home. He loved her very much, he was so infatuated with her, he couldn't live without her for even one moment, so he followed her. He crossed the river, not by boat, but by taking the help of a dead body. He scaled the wall of their house, because the main door was closed, with the help of a python. But he did not know this. He went into her apartment, she was startled. She said, "Why have you come?" He said, "I can't live without you, I will die!" She said, "Foolish! So much infatuation you have for me? So much passion you have for me? If you had the same infatuation and passion for God, by now you would have been liberated."

That gave the young man a tough shock. He turned back. He never saw her again. He came back and went to the guru, became a swami and devoted his whole life to God. His name is known to every Indian. He wrote a beautiful, inspired book on the glories of Rama. It is sung by every Indian, by poor illiterate labourers and also by the academics in the university.

So, the point of bhakti is very important in spiritual life, but you can't jump immediately. First read about the

glories of saints, then associate with them, then have a guru and have a relationship with him, then your way of devotion will be clear. It is the most difficult thing in life. You can have a great intellect, you can be the most powerful person on earth, you can be a great poet or an artist, a statesman or politician, but all these things are worldly achievements. They cannot give you fulfilment, they cannot give you vision. They are necessary for you to live in this world, they are necessary for your survival, but the true wealth is bhakti, devotion.

I will tell you a story. It is about a lady. She was a princess and maybe some of you know about her. She was living when Akbar the Great was ruling India. Do you know about Akbar the Great? History has three great men: Akbar the Great, Alexander the Great, and Ashoka the Great, and the names of all the three start with 'A'. First Alexander, you know about him, I don't have to tell you. Ashoka was born after Buddha. He took the message of Buddha throughout the world. He was the greatest emperor of India. In the fifteenth century, there was Akbar the Great.

In a western state of India there was a princess, known as Mirabai. When she was six years old, a saint visited her father's palace. That swami had a little statue of Krishna and she developed a liking for that statue. He gave that statue to her. She somehow developed the idea that Krishna was her husband. She was only six years old. I don't know how a girl of six years can think of a husband but there it is, she developed the idea, "Krishna is my husband", and she became completely enraptured in her love for him.

Her parents couldn't understand all this. They thought it was a child loving a doll and when the proper time came, she was married to a man. He was the most powerful king of India at that time in Chittor, near Udaipur. It was a place

near Jaipur in western India, a very powerful region. She went to him, but she was always merged in her love for Krishna, thinking that he was her husband. She used to converse with him in a closed room, just like you converse with your wife or husband. This was whispered about in the palace. Her husband thought that she might be having an affair with somebody, but when the doors were opened, they found that she was talking with herself. Finally her mother-in-law wanted to finish her, because she was a queen and she was behaving in a funny way; a queen has to be a queen, with lipstick, powder, cosmetics, dresses, and so on. She would go to the temple for kirtan. Her kirtans became very famous, and in kirtan with the common folk, she used to dance. The fame of her kirtan became so widespread that Akbar the Great used to come to attend her kirtan, but her mother-in-law did not like all this. Mirabai was an aristocrat, but she was moving with the common people. Her mother-in-law sent her poison in a drink, but when she took the poison, nothing happened to her. Then she sent a cobra in an empty basket, and when the basket was opened, it became the replica of Krishna, like a Shivalingam. It was not because she was performing a miracle, but her whole soul, her whole ego, her whole personality was merged in the idea, in the thought of Krishna. She was one-pointed all the time.

Finally, she left the palace. She came to Mathura (near Delhi), the place where Krishna was born. She wanted to live there for the rest of her life. She became the disciple of a great swami. This is a beautiful part of the story. When she went to Mathura, she went to the swami, the guru, but he refused to see her, sending the message, "I don't see women." She sent a message back, "I thought there is only one man in the whole world, Krishna, and all others are women. Where has this second man come from?"

According to the truth, there is only one Purusha, one reality, one man. We are all individual souls. I am not talking about the body, I am talking about the reality. There is only one Purusha; we are born of nature, we are born of Prakriti, we are born of matter. That was the philosophical question she put in her message to that guru, "I know that there is only one man in this universe, where has this second man come from?" The guru was astounded and accepted her as his disciple.

She spent the rest of her life in singing and singing, composing thousands of songs, all of which are love songs. They are songs of devotion. She considers Krishna to be her husband, loves him, serves him and wants him. When she died, she died in divine circumstances. She entered into a temple of Krishna and converted her matter into light.

This is also one of the yogic effects. When your bhakti overpowers you, then this physical body is converted into another material. In the beginning bhakti transforms your emotions, then it transforms your mind, then it transforms your attitudes, then it transforms your perceptions; maybe it transforms the physical body. The body can be disintegrated into the form of light. The body can be transformed into the form of flowers. The power of bhakti is very great. It is not only going to a sanctum sanctorum. Of course you can go, it is good; it is better than going to a pub, but it is not the ultimate.

This body is the temple. Krishna, or God, resides within you. You start from outside first, then you go inside, then you develop your love. You go on developing it more and more. First you forget all your difficulties, then you forget all your relationships, then you forget all past, present and future, and finally, you forget yourself. This is how the divine metamorphosis takes place.

—Satsang at Satyananda Ashram, Kypseli, 5 May 1984

God does not need any material thing from you. Of course, you give everything to Him. You offer your heart, you offer your head, you offer your money, you offer your children, but He doesn't want it. God only wants one thing from you—that is called bhakti. You understand what bhakti is? Your pure emotion, pure devotion, not in prayers, not in rituals, not even singing his glories. Even as you love your child, even as you love your beautiful girl, even as you are attached to your property and other things, that emotion—only that emotion—he wants.

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. How can we acquire discrimination?

Paramahamsaji: There are two forms of discrimination. One form is intellectual and mental, or theological and philosophical. The other is born of a higher experience. In fact, in the life of a spiritual aspirant, discrimination is the first qualification. In jnana yoga, discrimination is known as viveka, which means separating the real from the unreal; understanding the eternal from the non-eternal; realizing the truth from the untruth; and separating the spiritual from the non-spiritual.

What is viveka or discrimination? It is said that there is a bird known as hamsa, swan. It is able to separate milk from water. In the same way, there is a mixture of eternal and non-eternal values. You can find this mixture everywhere. Your thoughts, values, actions, ambitions, fantasies, imaginings and relationships are mixed. Everywhere there is a mixture of milk and water. If you do not separate them properly, through a process of analysis, then you are going to make mistakes all the time. Which thought is profitable and which is not? Which value is essential and which is not? Which imagination is right and which is not? This you will learn to discern only through a proper process of analysis.

This analysis is known as self-introspection. Self-introspection in jnana yoga is known as atmachintana. Before you are able to acquire discrimination, you must improve the quality of your mind. If your mind is crowded or cloudy, then you will be prejudiced and misunderstand the positive for the negative. Therefore, in order to realize

viveka, you must first go to a person with knowledge. He will charter certain values for you. After he has chartered those values for you, you should follow them for some time. After adhering to those values for some time, your mind will grow, and then it will be easier for you to discriminate.

There is an example. Once a Muslim devotee was praying to God. You know how the Muslims pray? It is called namaz. They spread a piece of cloth, sit in vajrasana, and then start praying. The devout Muslims pray five times a day. It is not necessary for them to be in a mosque. Anywhere, even in the middle of the road, will do. So once, one Muslim was offering his namaz in the middle of a road. At the same time, a young girl was on her way to meet her boyfriend. She was going past the place where that man was praying. She was so immersed in the thoughts of her boyfriend that she just walked over the carpet on which the man was praying. He was terribly annoyed. He shouted at her to stop. But she did not hear him. She kept on walking. He got up from his prayer and went after her, shouting at her, abusing her, and finally he caught her. She came out of her love fantasies, just for a moment, and asked him what the matter was. He said, "You unholy one, do you know that you walked over my carpet?" She replied, "So what if I walked over your carpet?" He said, "I was praying. I was offering my namaz. I was praying to God." The girl said, "I am sorry, I was so lost in the thought of my boyfriend that I did not really notice you and your carpet. But how is it that you were praying to your Beloved, and yet you noticed me going past?"

This is the difference between love and mere prayer. If you can love your boyfriend or girlfriend to such an extent that you can transcend time and space, that is love. If your love has not destroyed reality, you do not love; it is only

passion. If your love has not destroyed selfishness, it is not love; it is passion. You have to make a clear-cut difference and distinction between love and passion. However, many people mistake passion for love. You can love your child, your husband or wife, but how do you make it love, and not passion? This is the problem you will have to solve. I can't solve this problem for you. You have to find out how to change that passion into love.

In the Hindu classics, there is a story, the story is of Krishna as a child. His mother used to love him so much that she forgot everything else. While sleeping, eating, bathing, or just moving around, she was always aware of her child. For her, he was not a mortal. For her, he was not just a child. For her, he wasn't even God. For her, he was herself. The person who you love is you. Not that you are him, but he is you. There is the feeling of oneness. There is no feeling of separation, not even for one hour, not even for one night. It is life after life. In external love, you feel rapture for some time. When people love each other, what do they say? They say, "I and you are one." Maybe, for a moment, they do feel some sort of love. But then it fades away, because it was not spiritual or divine. It was sensual and limited, and that is why it faded away. The feeling of love has to be perpetuated. It has to be continuous. My beloved may be wretched, wicked, or ugly, but I don't care because love has no eyes or intellect; love has only heart. Just heart. It has only one feeling. But what happens in our daily life? The husband judges his wife, or the wife judges her husband. On what basis? Not on the basis of love. You are good, bad, ugly or this or that; you don't listen to me; you don't care for me, and so on. This is not love, this is just passion. The path of love is very difficult. It is good to hear about it and it is the last thing in life which you can renounce.

—Satsang at Satyanandashram, Kypseli, 6 May 1984

Meditation

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

This is my first trip to your beautiful island and town. I have been visiting Greece for many years in connection with teaching, preaching and promoting yoga and I was really surprised to see the interest and enthusiasm of the Greek people. Of course, in this age yoga does not need any introduction, it has become well known throughout the world, in every country, and the scientists everywhere are accepting the need for yoga in human life.

The word 'yoga' is a very general expression, just as you use the word 'education'. What exactly do you mean by education? There are various faculties in education, and when you say education, you mean one or all of those faculties. In the same way, when we use the word yoga we mean one or more faculties. The science and the practice of yoga is related to every aspect of human life. There is a branch of yoga which is related to the body and life principle; there is the form of yoga which is related to mind, emotion and intellect, therefore there are many branches of yoga.

Therapeutic yoga

It has been established by the scientists today that in many psychosomatic illnesses yoga can be very helpful. That is the therapeutic aspect of yoga which has been discovered recently, in the last three or four decades, by western scientists. This aspect of yoga is vigorously practised in many countries throughout the world for treatment of chronic psychosomatic diseases. This is a technical side of yoga in which medical men and scientists are working in India, Japan, Poland, the Soviet Union and the US. This



aspect of yoga which I am talking about has become so famous that thousands of books are being written by authorities. However, this evening that is not my subject. I am just giving you a glimpse of the side of yoga which has become so popular in our materialistic society. There are thousands of yoga teachers in Europe, Asia, America and in other continents who teach yoga for this purpose only.

There is another aspect of yoga which has also drawn the attention of the people today: the yoga concerning relaxation of physical, mental and emotional stress. In our century, in our time, stress has increased all over the world. The rich are under stress and the poor people are also under stress. Stress is not only born of prosperity and affluence; it is born of epidemics, famine and wars,

therefore stress-born diseases throughout the world are on the increase. In our day-to-day life, our behaviour is greatly influenced by these stresses, and there are certain practices in yoga which can effectively balance the stress condition. It has been found that during certain practices of raja yoga the brain waves change. As a result of the change in the pattern of the brain waves, stress is removed from the heart and nervous system, but I am not going to talk on this subject either this evening.

Mankind's inner need

People are now getting increasingly interested in discovering the deeper areas of their own existence, their own personality. Whatever our position may be, many times we begin to think; we become introspective. "Who am I and what is my relationship with the whole universe? Am I in any way connected with the universe or am I a completely different unit tossing in this great existence?" We look at ourselves but we are not prepared to accept that this body and mind is ourself. Sometimes, during deep introspection, these questions arise in the mind of everybody. These questions have arisen in the minds of people thousands of years ago. "Who am I?" is the question.

Wise men in different times have tried to give an answer. In India the wise men gave an answer to this question. Two thousand five hundred years ago Lord Buddha gave an answer to this question. A little later another wise man in Greece also gave an answer. There has been a tradition of wise men throughout the East who have tried to give an answer to this question of "Who am I?", but the answer is not intellectual, it is through the practices of yoga that one can really experience the answer. Of course you can grow, you can proceed through a philosophical process and you can try to decide the nature of your Self, but an intellectual answer is not enough. The knowledge of

the Self, or the knowledge of the higher consciousness, or the supreme consciousness, should be a matter of personal experience because it is not through the mind, not through the intellect, not through a thinking process, that you understand your Self.

Yoga has an answer through a practical way of meditation. The system of meditation is out-and-out practical and therefore exact. Meditation is a process in which you transcend time, space and object for some time. Then the question comes, "How can we meditate and what exactly happens in meditation?"

Personal experience

In the science of yoga there is a complete system of meditation known as raja yoga. In this system, necessary preparation and ways to develop meditation are fully described.

Meditation is based on one-pointedness of mind. The mind which thinks many, many things should be concentrated around one object and one idea. If you carefully analyze your mind, you will find that it is dissipated. Therefore, it is not able to go in, it is not able to experience itself. When the mind is one-pointed it thinks of only one object, thing or item and then it becomes very powerful, it gains momentum and acquires high frequency. Those people who are trying to develop their willpower and mental power must remember that without concentration of mind, without one-pointedness of mind, the willpower, the mental power, cannot be obtained.

At the same time, you know how difficult it is to control the mind or discipline it, or bring the mind to one point. In yogic techniques there are a few practices through which concentration of mind, one-pointedness of mind and meditation, can be achieved. One of the most powerful ways for achieving concentration of mind is called pranayama.

Pranayama

It is a system of breathing. The breathing is practised through alternate nostrils and between inspiration and expiration the breath is held for some time. When you inhale through one nostril and exhale through another nostril, at that time you are simultaneously dealing with the two hemispheres of the brain which are in constant motion and disturbance. If you practise pranayama for ten or fifteen minutes every day in the morning, according to the system, you will find that you have achieved tranquillity of mind.

There is another way of achieving concentration of mind which is very easy and intelligible: observing your own natural breath. You have been breathing from the time of birth, all the twenty-four hours, but unconsciously. Breath is connected with the life force and when you breathe in and breathe out, you should observe that. Observing your own breath for ten or fifteen minutes every morning will give you absolute tranquillity of mind.

Mantra

There is another practice which is chanting of mantra. Mantra is a sound which denotes your personality. This sound is present in each and everybody in the form of unmanifested vibration and frequencies. Just as everybody has an individual face, in the same way everybody has an individual mantra for themselves. This mantra should not be misunderstood to be a holy word or a divine name. Sound, as you know or should know, is a form of universal energy. Sound is energy in every way and this mantra has colour and form, frequency and movement. When you practise the mantra for some time, it brings about one-pointedness, concentration and meditation.

The mantra can be practised in many ways: you can practise the mantra mentally, with the rhythm of your natural breath, or by chanting it audibly. You can chant the

mantra with concentration on the mid-eyebrow centre, or in the centre of the brain, and there are many other psychic centres in the body on which you can concentrate and chant the mantra or think about the mantra, but the centre in the heart is considered to be a very powerful centre for those people who are predominantly emotional.

Trataka

In the middle of the eyebrow centre there is a very important psychic nerve and when you close your eyes you can visualize that centre. If you are not able to visualize that centre, then there is a practice. Light a candle in front of you and concentrate or gaze on the flame of the candle for a few seconds without blinking your eyes, without moving your body. Then close your eyes and concentrate in the middle of the eyebrows and discover the luminous point. This luminous point is a very, very tiny point, much smaller than a star you can see in the sky. You have to discover that luminous point for you to go deep into yourself.

Many people who try to practise hypnotism start with this practice, but this is not the purpose for which I am teaching it to you. It is because you must have a basis for concentration and that tiny little star or spot which is known as bindu should be seen in order to deepen your concentration.

In fact, this centre, the middle of the eyebrows, is directly connected with a very important centre which is situated on the upper portion of the spine. The uppermost portion of the spine has a small gland known as ajna chakra. Some call it the eye of intuition and it has another name also, the third eye. It has many names and it is not necessary for me to tell you all that, but it is very difficult to concentrate on that centre directly unless you have a vision of that centre somehow.

In the practice of trataka, you first concentrate on the candle flame and then through the candle flame you

slowly develop the luminous point. By concentrating on that luminous point you ultimately come to ajna chakra, the seat of intuition. After discovering the luminous point you can practise your mantra in that centre.

Yantra

There is another important practice in meditation or dhyana yoga. This is the practice of visual concentration on yantra. There are two types of visual formations: one is called mandala and the other yantra. The mandala is a pictorial form and the yantra is a geometrical form. These mandalas are sometimes anthropomorphic, sometimes theriomorphic, sometimes of animal form, sometimes half human and half animal, so on and so forth. However, yantras are the most powerful form of meditation. These are non-intellectual substances and it is very difficult to explain the theory of yantras. From olden days, almost every religion, every culture and every nation was practising the science of yantra.

These yantras represent the symbol of your unconscious, the symbol of your unknown nature, and there are many types of yantras. If you practise concentration on them you begin to visualize some inner experiences. The concentration on yantra influences dreams, thought and one's way of thinking. I have told you already that it is not necessary to intellectualize the yantras because you can't. These yantras are present in the universe. In fact, the whole universe is geometrically designed and in your mind also all the thoughts are stored, or rather recorded, in a geometrical shape. It is wonderful to know that whatever I am saying to you is in the form of sound, but when it is recorded in your mind, finally and ultimately, it is in geometric shape.

The yantras represent different forms of energy in creation or the universe. There is not a more powerful form

of concentration than concentration on the yantra. These yantras are related to or connected with the six spheres of the mind. According to yoga and other sciences, there are seven spheres. One sphere is this sphere in which you are living at the moment. Besides this, there are six other spheres and each sphere has a yantra or geometrical symbol.

Centres of energy relating the individual and the universe

If you concentrate, for example, on a symbol called the inverted triangle, intellectually it means nothing, but you will be surprised that by concentrating on that inverted triangle your mind is able to express its deeper experiences. Therefore, on this basis there are six psychic centres in your body. They are the centres of energy related to the whole universe. Man is a part of the universe. The whole universe is present in you, in us, in a microcosmic form and certainly it is possible that one can go within oneself and experience the totality of the experience. This aspect of yoga has now drawn great attention throughout the world. There are millions of people who are trying to discover their deeper, higher and transcendental nature.

It does not take much time to practise yoga. If you can devote a few minutes from your busy life every day, either in the morning or in the night, and follow just one system of meditation or one system of concentration, you will find that in the course of time you are able to discover something more about yourself.

There are four main divisions of yoga: karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga and jnana yoga. Karma yoga is to be practised for balancing your personality. Bhakti yoga should be practised for developing a healthy emotional personality. The practices of jnana yoga are for the mind and supreme knowledge. Then there are other forms of yoga which are equally important. The practices of hatha

yoga are well known throughout the world. They are good for the body and your health. The practices of kundalini yoga are for developing a healthy and strong mind. The practices of laya yoga are for those who want to go deep into samadhi or the absolute mind.

Samadhi

There is a very high stage in yoga called samadhi. While you are practising meditation, while you are practising yoga, there comes a very short moment, there comes a very rare moment, when this little ego is lost and the higher self becomes manifest. In order to attain this particular state, people have to make a lot of effort. In yoga this is known as samadhi and Lord Buddha called it nirvana. It is for a very short moment; it comes as a flying glimpse. During that moment the external light is put off and the inner light is lit. This is the aim of yoga for sincere and serious-minded people. Whichever form of yoga you need, or can accept, practise it and it will help you.

A few years ago, I came to Athens and established one small school of yoga, but today thousands of people in Athens and around Greece are practising yoga according to their own wish and need. The one thing which they want and the one thing which they are striving to experience, is the inner Self.

Whatever your need and desire, you can start yoga at any point. With the body upright and straight, with the eyes closed, when you devote ten to fifteen minutes with absolute regularity every day and keep before your mind one principle, one object or one sound or one yantra, you are sure to succeed sooner or later. We have lived with external material life and it has not given us the promised things. Now let us also try to live with the inner being.

—Discourse at Municipal Theatre, Mytilini, 7 May 1984

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. How can yoga help in our western education? Maybe in theory we know certain things, but in western education we have neglected the right hemisphere of the brain. How can yoga redress the balance?

Paramahansa: In the field of education, a lot of research has been made in many countries, including France, in connection with yoga and its effect on children. These researches are divided into two sections. One is the effect of yoga practices on the general intelligence, behaviour and discipline, or you may say, manifestation, of normal children. The second is the effect of yoga on those children who are mentally-challenged, who are not normal. Two different forms of yoga have been found very effective in this respect.

For improving the mental condition, intelligence and manifestation of the mentally-challenged children, two special forms of yoga have been found very useful, which are known as concentration and meditation. There is another form of yoga which is known as relaxation and a third form known as hatha yoga or the yoga of postures and breathing. However, concentration and meditation have been found most useful for the mentally-challenged children.

Concentration and meditation have two bases: concentration on sound and concentration on form. Form has two categories: a pictorial mandala, and a yantra or concentric geometrical forms. It has been found that the yantras which are in geometric form have a direct relationship or effect on the archetype of the child. In yogic philosophy, intelligence is an effect

of the proper formation of archetypes; children who are mentally backward have a confused process of the formation of archetypes.

For normal children, it is the practice of yoga postures and breathing which is important. We have found that children like to practise these three things: relaxation, breathing techniques and yoga postures.

A few years ago, an experiment was done in a higher secondary school in Paris and this program was continued for over two years. The education inspectors made a complete observation and study of the effects of the practices on children. The various kinds of data, including

IQs, were collected and it was found that the children benefited greatly. Parents were happy, the teachers were also happy, but most of all the children liked the practices so much that they would remind the teacher when the yoga class had to take place.

In yoga, the internal discipline does not mean the sort of exoteric discipline which we use in our social sense. In fact, here the discipline includes the physical discipline, hormonal discipline and archetypal discipline. If the child has a difficult consciousness on account of their early training or early life, then they will not be successfully disciplined even if given the best social discipline.



Within everybody's consciousness, not only children's but yours too, there are certain forms or rather symbols. The mind at a deeper level, the consciousness at a deeper level, exists in the form of symbols, not in the form of frequencies. This is something which yoga has discovered.

On one level, the mind exists in the form of waves. On another level it has frequencies. And at the base level, it has symbols or forms. These symbols and forms are in an unmanifested state. They have to be excited, they have to be disturbed. An intelligent person, or an intelligent child, is one whose archetypes, whose symbolic formations have been thus disturbed.

Secondly, there has to be a proper hormonal balance. Besides this hormonal balance, the relationship between the body and the endocrine glands must be correct. Of course there is, in yoga, a sort of external discipline, as you have in religion, but that is not academically or classically accepted by yoga. You don't have to tell the child that he should be good. You don't have to tell him that he should be disciplined, because goodness and discipline are an outcome of a proper physiological, biological, emotional and deeper discipline.

Now, these yoga postures which are known as asanas, about which you might already know a little, they are not just exercises. In classical yogic texts it is said that these yogic postures work through a group of nerve or energy channels. Externally these yoga postures look like gymnastic exercises and sometimes you can equate them with any other exercise, but the experiments have shown that they have different effects.

Posture means 'position', a situation of the body whereby the two forces in this physical body are balanced. These two forces are known as sympathetic and parasympathetic: input and output, or you could even say the life force and the mental force. If there is an



imbalance between the life force and the mental force, then problems come in the mind.

We have been teaching yoga to children in many countries. We have found that children like yoga very much.

Q. Can we say that yoga makes an individual happier and more enlightened? Can we also say that yoga makes a social group happier, enlightened and creative?

Paramahansa: Yoga has various roles to fulfil. There is a form of yoga which is called yoga therapy. It is practised for blood pressure, asthma, sciatica and many psychosomatic illnesses. There is another form of yoga which is used for overcoming a stress situation in the body. In yoga, they realize three types of stresses: physical stress, mental stress and emotional stress. For these three types of stress you have three types of practices.

There are also forms of yoga which people can practise in order to improve their habits; it is more in the line of personal discipline in life. Then there is another form of yoga in which the mind is brought into a focus of concentration. By increasing or accentuating the energies of the mind, the creativity in the individual is expressed. Beyond this there are other forms of yoga sadhana which are used by the mystics.

Frankly speaking, yoga, by its philosophy and nature, is individualistic. It is not a social ideology. It is not a group ideology. It is out-and-out individualistic. I practise, I improve. You practise, you improve. However, an individual is the centre of society. Society is built up by individuals. Society can influence the individual, true, but individuals can and do create society. In this particular respect yoga has been very clear. Keep it individualistic, because the individual has to improve. Later on, this individual can create his society. After all, in history it has happened. It is one man who leads the society.

There is another form of yoga and that is kundalini yoga. It is intended for a select type of people. In this yoga, certain energy centres in the physical body are expressed or manifested, because kundalini yoga believes that in the physical body there are dormant psychic centres. When you awaken those centres, that indirectly awakens the brain. In yoga it is said that only one portion of the brain is active and nine portions of the brain are not active, which means that only a fragment of the brain is functioning. There are other centres which are lying dormant, which are not participating in the scheme of evolution and these centres in the brain are connected with those psychic centres. That is considered to be a very important part of yoga intended for select people. Therefore, everything depends on what you personally want and need.

When I go to the United States, everybody is asking for peace of mind and relaxation. When I go to Japan, everybody is talking about how to awaken their energy. If I go to England, they ask which yoga they should practise for blood pressure, sciatica, multiple sclerosis. When I meet Indians, they ask me which yoga to practise in order to think more about God. When I go to the Soviet Union, they ask which yoga to practise to develop telepathy and clairvoyance. So, different people want to practise yoga for different purposes, according to their desire and according to their need.

Q. Is the position of the body in meditation important?

Paramahansa: To begin with, the spine has to be upright and straight and any comfortable posture will do. Later, however, you must assume a very important posture. Press the perineum with one heel and press the abdominal viscera with the other heel. The perineum and abdominal viscera are two important centres which send disturbing influxes to the mind. If they are properly pressed, there will be less disturbance. In yoga this is

known as siddhasana. It is the posture for meditation and it is easy. One can even maintain this posture for three hours after some months of practice. A beginner can do fifteen minutes without any difficulty.

Q. Do the yogic postures function because one uses consciousness or awareness, or would they have results without your being conscious of what you do?

Paramahansa: Yoga postures are designed from animal postures. In each incarnation of an animal there has been a continual stress on a particular glandular system that the yogis have seen or observed. Every creature, every being in one particular incarnation, continues to be in that physical body, creating stress on one particular limb, organ or hormone and thereby evolution takes place. There are certain secretions and other factors which are special to that incarnation.

When you practise any yoga posture in the form of gymnastic exercises, in a dynamic way, then they will have only that effect, but in the yogic system that particular posture should be maintained for a period of time, and you must follow the system of breathing. When you follow the system of breathing, concentration automatically takes place. The terminology used is 'yoga asana'. The word 'yoga' is used here in the sense of union. When two things are connected it is called yoga, which means that in this physical body there are two things which have to be connected.

In yogic philosophy they talk about the two forces in the physical body. One force is called life, or prana, another force is called mind or consciousness. We are functioning and alive because of these two forces. If one of them is withdrawn, then we can't function or live, but these two forces are always in a state of disagreement or imbalance. When there is a disagreement, imbalance

or discord between these two forces, then the mental or physical problems take place. So, when you are maintaining a particular posture, you are trying to unite these two forces on one harmonious level.

When you maintain a posture for some time, you are exerting pressure on a particular gland of the body. There are two types of glands in this physical body, according to modern science. According to yoga, there are three types of glands: endocrine glands, exocrine glands and the energy system. A blockage can occur in one of these three systems. Endocrine glands can be blocked; when insulin is blocked you get diabetes, when adrenaline is blocked you get asthma. In the same way, you have exocrine glands. They are responsible for the biochemical structure of the body, like saliva, hydrochloric acid, enzymes, etc. The third is energy. Energy can also get blocked, creating mental, physical and emotional problems. When you maintain the posture for a particular period of time, then these blocks of the endocrine, exocrine and energy systems are removed. Therefore, it is not only concentration, but also position that is of importance.

Q. It was mentioned that meditation and concentration are important for a person. Can you explain a method or a way to follow these?

Paramahansa ji: Anyone who has to go deep into meditation has to start from exoteric practices, because the body is the basis. Finer than the body are the senses. Finer than the senses is the mind. Finer than the mind is the intellect. Finer than the intellect is emotion. Finer than emotion is the ego. This ego is of two kinds: lower ego and higher ego. You know Socrates used to say, "Know thyself." He meant the higher Self.

Meditation has to start on this basis. First, one should practise yoga postures, then pranayama or breathing. Both



the practices can take more than twenty minutes, then one should choose for oneself one or two practices in which the mind and the senses are separated. In other words, the mind should be isolated. It is a prerequisite for concentration and meditation that the mind should be isolated. If the mind is constantly fed by the stimuli of the senses from outside, it cannot concentrate, just as the flame of a candle cannot become steady and straight as long as there is a wind blowing. You close all the windows, that's all.

First of all, the senses must be hypnotized. I'm using the word hypnotize, don't mind it. There are practices like chanting, certain mudras and bandhas, certain forms of concentration: on object, on light, on sound, whereby the senses are numbed for the time being. When the mind is isolated, it does not receive external sensations and perceptions. At that time, one should select for oneself one practice of concentration.

Concentration means fixing the mind on an object for a particular period of time, say for about five minutes. Out of the five minutes, the mind will be concentrated maybe half a minute, because even if the mind is isolated, it has its subjective experiences. You have plugged the external perceptions, but what about the internal perceptions? By the practice of concentration you plug those internal experiences also. This continues and suddenly it turns into meditation.

In meditation there is only awareness of the object. There is no awareness of the ego. There is no awareness of time and space. Just the particular object on which you have been concentrating becomes clear. In this, one of the easiest of the practices is concentration on your own breath. It is easiest because you don't have to do it, because you are always breathing, twenty-four hours, you just have to add one more thing: awareness that you are breathing. You are breathing for twenty-four hours, but

you don't know it. With your eyes closed, for ten minutes you have to become very aware that you are breathing.

By fixing your inner gaze at the tip of your nose, just witness the natural flow of the breath. Start with five minutes, then start counting. Count in reverse order for some time, it can be ten minutes, fix a time for yourself. In ten minutes you breathe 150 times: 150, 149, 148, continue back to one. If you happen to forget the sequence of numbers somewhere in between, which usually happens, because when the concentration begins you suddenly miss a number, you start again from 150. You must make a resolve, "From 150 to 1, I will count and see my breath and know each and every number." If 150 is a bit difficult, start with 75.

When this is done, then you start a sound. You develop the concept of a sound with the breath. The sound should be practised in two ways: the sound of inhaling the breath is So and the exhaling breath is Ham. That is how you must feel. So you maintain a steady stream of awareness: So-Ham, while you are following the breath. The same concept can be reversed, when you are breathing out it is Ham and when you are breathing in it is So. It is Ham-So. It is the same thing, you are only changing the order of your concept.

By the time you are practising this, if concentration begins to take place, you begin to see some sort visions. The moment you begin to see the visions, stop the practice, concentrate in the middle of the eyebrows. At this time you must try to visualize one particular symbol or one particular thing or one particular object which you have already chosen for yourself. With that, your meditation begins.

This is just one technique which I have spoken about. There are many techniques, each according to the individual.

—Satsang at Hotel Xenia, Mytilini, 7 May 1984

In yoga, the internal discipline does not mean the sort of exoteric discipline which we use in our social sense. In fact, here the discipline includes the physical discipline, hormonal discipline and archetypal discipline. If the child has a difficult consciousness on account of their early training or early life, then they will not be successfully disciplined even if given the best social discipline.

Yoga: Our Precious Heritage

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

I am really happy to see you all assembled here this evening, to hear about the very important science of life. This is my first trip to your beautiful town, and I hope that it is not going to be the last. I come from India, and I have been visiting Greece for many years, particularly Athens and Thessaloniki as well as Kalamata. I have visited many parts of Greece: the islands of Crete, Rhodes and Mitilini. Although I am from India, and I live in India, I spend most of my time travelling around the world to every country and all people, preaching and teaching.

Preaching and teaching is not my profession. However, about forty-five years ago I dedicated myself to a path of inner quest. I wanted to discover something which is beyond the mind, beyond the intellect, and beyond human understanding. In connection with this, I practised many religions and many paths. I studied Hindu books, Greek mythology, the Bible and the Koran, and tried to follow every path for inner realization. Today, I can say that all these paths are very noble, very reassuring, promising and genuine. Whichever path you follow sincerely, you will definitely arrive at the destination of inner realization.

However, with all this, I found great difficulty in walking on the path as a human being. Sometimes I found that the body did not cooperate, sometimes I found that the mind would revolt, and sometimes I found that my karmas would not help me. Therefore, I began to search for a way to make myself strong, capable, and competent.

During this search I discovered a beautiful science called yoga. I found that through the practices of yoga I could solve the problems of the body, the senses, the mind, the karma, and all the problems related to myself.

In the beginning, when I used to sit for contemplation, I developed a lot of physical problems with digestion, blood pressure, and so on. After systematically learning and practising yoga for a few years, I came to one conclusion,

which I want to share with you tonight. You may know the path, you may know the destination, and you may even have a good guide. But if you are not capable, you cannot walk and you cannot reach it. Intellectual understanding is not enough. Intellectually, you can understand what the Self is; intellectually, you can understand what the inner light is; intellectually, you can understand what peace of mind is and what relaxation is. However, mere



understanding will not help you, because the body, the senses, the mind, the ego and the karmas are constantly not cooperating with you. Then the path of yoga becomes necessary. Whichever path you follow, whichever religion you follow, whichever sect you follow, and whichever philosophy or doctrine you follow, there is one beginning and there is one starting point. That path is known as yoga.

Misunderstandings about yoga

Many times yoga is misunderstood. Some think it is a path of heretics; some think it is a sect; some think it is a sort of religion; some think that it is a kind of magic; and some think that it is just renouncing everything and sitting in a cave with closed eyes. Maybe, among you, there may be many who are holding these ideas because, when you see me teaching yoga, you identify yoga with me. Since I am a Hindu and a monk, or because I have a religion, you may think if I teach yoga it must be a religion.

This is not sound logic. Imagine that I do not teach yoga for a moment, but I teach physics, chemistry and biology. Do you think these are religions, just because I teach them? This is how, many times, people make mistakes about understanding yoga. In fact, yoga is none of these. Many people have tried to study yoga in the light of science in the last four decades. Doctors have studied yoga in the light of science; research scholars have tried to study yoga in the light of philosophy, and so on.

In April this year, when the Russian cosmonauts went to space, did you know that a yoga teacher went with them? Do you believe that the Soviet Union would have sent a religious preacher in the cosmos? No. They would be the last people to do so, because their philosophy has nothing to do with religion. This yoga teacher, who went into space, went for scientific investigation. Is it not enough to say that yoga is not a religion, it is a science, or

do you need more proof about it? For those people who think yoga is a religion, I can give you volumes of scientific evidence collected in America, in Soviet Union, in Japan, in Poland, in India, and in many other countries.

The science of yoga

Yoga is a very broad-based science. Some people think it is a path of meditation. They are not wrong, but they are not completely right. Some people think yoga is good for therapy, good for the physical body, good for the diseases; they are also right. But not completely. Some people just believe in meditation, some people like to do yoga postures (hatha yoga exercises), some people may just like to do the yogic breathing, or practise yogic relaxation, while others may just like to practise yogic self-analysis. Each of them has a lop-sided view of yoga.

Yoga is an integral system, and this integral system of yoga is connected with your life and personality. It is connected with your finer and gross emotions. It has connections with your conscious mind, subconscious mind and unconscious mind. It has a relationship with your intellect and ego. It has a relationship with your endocrine glands and exocrine glands. It is connected with your sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. You must accept that yoga deals with you. Who are you? You are not just the body, you are not just the mind, you are not just the intellect, or ego, or emotions. You are a combination of all these, and a little more. What about your personality, what about your karma? An individual is a combination of many things.

Yoga takes into account all these sides of a human being, and has to be understood as a combination of many types of practices, connected with each and every phase of development of the human personality.

Four major types of yoga

Traditionally, there are four major types of yoga. They are known as karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, and jnana yoga. These four major yogas are defined and designed according to your temperament. For those people who are hyper-emotional, or too emotional, there is the practice of bhakti yoga, through which they can create a balance in their emotional structure. For those people who have a schizophrenic mind, a weak mind, a dissipated mind, an undisciplined mind, the practices of raja yoga are more suitable. In this way, the different yogas are suitable for the different temperaments of human beings. If you study human beings throughout the world, you can classify them into four types: some people are temperamentally predominantly dynamic, they are hyperactive; another type is just emotional; there are some who are more intellectual, rational; and there are those who are predominantly psychic. According to the peculiarity of their temperament, one type of yoga is more suitable to each category.

Hatha yoga

Besides these four major yogas, there are also minor yogas. One is hatha yoga. It has become very popular in the last several decades, particularly in western countries, because it is meant for people who have impure habits, who do not breathe good air, eat pure food, and do not have a proper lifestyle. In the West, the pollution is very high: noise pollution, air pollution, thought pollution. There are so many types of pollution that the body becomes sick. If you eat canned food and preserved food, your body is definitely going to be filthy. Therefore, hatha yoga has become very popular. So popular that if I tell you the number of teachers teaching yoga in western Europe, you won't believe me. Four or five years ago, the number of teachers teaching yoga, in just western Europe, was 72,000.

Mantra yoga

Another important yoga that has caught the attention of the western world is mantra yoga. People have found that through the practices of mantra yoga, they can relax, control their brain waves and their blood pressure. Not only that, through the practices of mantra yoga, they can achieve a very high quality of concentration of mind. This has become so popular that, now in the West, there are thousands of people practising mantra in the morning and at night. Through the practices of mantra, one can check the ever-developing and ever-consuming stress conditions of the physical body.

Stress in today's world

The modern technology and structure of society has created a condition which the scientists call stress. This stress condition affects the mind and body, as well as the behaviour within families. There are scientists who state that eighty-nine per cent of all of today's diseases originate from stress conditions. Mental hospitals are packed. People take hallucinogenic drugs that cost millions and trillions of dollars, or pounds, or drachmas. The suicide rates are so high. Sexual discipline has broken down. All this is due to stress.

A man who has no stress, or a man who has controlled his stress, won't behave like this. Why should I smoke marijuana? What for? Because I am suffering from stress, or I want to overcome the stress. So I go this way, or that way, and all these ways are wrong and dangerous. If any of you are doing this, please don't get angry with me. I am here to tell you the truth, and not to preach a religion. It is not my opinion; it is the opinion of the scientists. Quarrels

in the family originate from stress; cardiac diseases originate from stress; peptic ulcers originate from stress. The scientists have discovered that through the practices of mantra, one can check the ever-developing and ever-consuming stress conditions within the physical body.

Other paths of yoga

There are also people of a different type in this world. They do not like to practise yoga for the body, nor do they like to practise yoga for stress conditions. They want to practise yoga in order to increase the quality of their mind. Take a magnifying glass and place it between the sun and an object. The object will burn because the solar rays are concentrated. Now, remove the magnifying glass, the solar rays fall on the object but cannot burn it, because they are not concentrated. How do you light your Olympic torch? By concentrating the rays of the sun. When the rays of the sun are concentrated, through some process, concave glass or other means, they are able to light the torch, because the energy that is concentrated becomes powerful. As concentrated solar energy becomes powerful, or channelled water becomes powerful, in the same way, if you are able to concentrate your thoughts into one pattern, your mind becomes powerful. For those people who have a dissipated mind, a flowing mind, or an undisciplined mind with no willpower or mental power, there is a type of yoga.

There are some who are entirely different. They don't care for the body, they don't care for the mind, they don't want to develop their willpower, and they don't want to develop their psychic power. They just want one thing about which Socrates spoke thousands of years ago, "Know thyself." Socrates meant that you

have to know your Self, not the body, not your name, not the mind, not the ego, not the intellect, and not whether you are a Greek, an Indian, a Catholic, or a Hindu, but something else. What is that? "Who are you? Who am I?" This is a question that haunts many people at some time in life. When you are engaged in the business of life you forget it, but, eventually, it comes to everybody's mind. Not only to an Indian mind or a Greek mind, but to every human being this question comes, "Who am I?" There are hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world who want an answer to this question. Answering this question intellectually is not the real answer. You must experience it. But how? If you want to practise hatha yoga, go ahead. Find a good teacher, and he will teach you. If you want to practise relaxation, find a competent teacher. Any competent teacher can teach you that. But if you want to know the Self, and experience your Self at a deep mental state, you will have to find yourself a guru, and not a teacher.

There are some forms of yoga which can be learned from a competent yoga teacher, and there are other forms of yoga which should be learned from an experienced guru. Out of all the systems of yoga, the system of meditation is supreme. This is something you cannot find anywhere because, in yoga, the process of meditation is gradual and systematic. Yoga teaches you how you should start meditation, how you should try to concentrate your mind. If you are not able to discipline your mind in meditation, then what else can you do? Practise any form of yoga and after some time you will know what you are searching for.

—Discourse at Patra, 10 May 1984

The Purpose of Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

I am not an Indian ambassador, but I am an ambassador of yoga. I carry the message and science of yoga to the remotest corners of the world and I have discovered that in every country, everybody knows about yoga. They know that through the practices of yoga one can feel healthier and be happier and stronger.

International responses to yoga

The Soviet people feel that by the practices of yoga you can develop your psychic powers. Americans think that by the practices of yoga you can relax and control your stress. People in the United Kingdom and European countries believe that you can cure chronic diseases. The Japanese believe that you can train your body, mind and emotions, and then you can pray successfully. They feel that if you are not disciplined physically, mentally and emotionally, your prayers are superficial. In Australia, people believe that through yoga you can experience greater happiness from life.

In India people believe all these. They believe that through one form of yoga you can cure diseases, by another form of yoga you can develop your mental powers, with another form you can pray successfully, and with yet another form of yoga you can relax the mind, emotions and body. Indians believe that yoga can be practised for many reasons, but they believe that all these are not the object of yoga. If yoga can cure your body, it is incidental. If yoga can relax your mind and give you tranquillity of



mind, it is a by-product. All these cannot be the object and aim of yoga. The question then arises, "What is the aim of yoga? Why should one practise yoga?"

What is the purpose of yoga?

Well, if you are ill you practise yoga, if your mind is dissipated and confused and tired, you practise yoga, if your personality is not normal and balanced you practise yoga, or if you want to develop your psychic power or your willpower you practise yoga. However, these are not the object of yoga. What, then, is the object?

For many thousands of years in India, the wise men have used yoga for one definite purpose. Many centuries ago a wise man said, "Know thyself." He was a wise man from Greece and he is immortal in the hearts of sincere seekers of yoga. His philosophy ran parallel with the vedantic philosophy of India. He did not say, "Know the body", he did not say, "Know the mind", he did not say, "Know this or that", he said, "Know thyself."

This question, this interrogation baffled the contemporary intellectuals of Greece. Many of them did not know what this crazy man was talking about.

What happened to Socrates you know very well, but the question which he put is an eternal question. If you are a thinker, you must think about this question.

If you are a person with a contemplative mind, you must put these questions to yourself, “Who am I? Am I this body? That means that the body is my last and only definition, and when I die I am finished. Am I this mind? Am I something beyond body and mind? Am I just matter and nothing more than matter?”

Behind this body, behind this mind, behind this external, empirical consciousness, there is a higher and greater consciousness in you and that consciousness is known by various names. Some call it Self. The Upanishads called it atma. Some people call it super-ego. People call it by different names. To discover it is the main object for which yoga is practised.

Union with the Self

There are various forms of yoga. Yoga literally means ‘union’, ‘connection’ or ‘merging of two objects into one’. When the river merges into the ocean, that act is yoga. When you mix sugar in your tea, and it mixes completely, that is called yoga. Or when you put on the connection of the switch and the lines join together, positive and negative, that is called yoga. Therefore, yoga must be properly defined.

In this whole universe there are two realities. One is called the transcendental and the other is known as empirical. The empirical self is known as the little self or individual self. Then there is the transcendental or cosmic or universal Self. All these are just names. There is something absolute and there is something relative. There is something homogeneous and there is something individual. You are an individual. You are an individual soul. Just as electrical energy is individualized in this microphone

or in this light, in the same way the eternal, transcendental, cosmic or universal energy is individualized in each and every form through a process of the ego.

There is a force called the ego which is an individual force, therefore the individual is the empirical self. When your individual consciousness merges with the universal consciousness, that is yoga. Or I will make it more simple, when your little mind merges with the greater mind, that is yoga. Or when this little man merges with the cosmic consciousness, that is yoga. This is the literal meaning and definition of yoga.

How to practise yoga

The question comes, “How to practise it?” There are various forms of yoga and if I have the time I will talk to you about them, but in all the forms of yoga there is one process involved. You can practise any yoga from any teacher, any guru or any sect, only one process is involved. When your mind is withdrawn for some time from external objects to an internal object, that is the process of yoga.

The mind is projected outside, the mind receives cognition, perception and knowledge through the five senses from the objects. This is called external knowledge. This is called objective knowledge. This is known in philosophy as empirical knowledge. The five senses are the nose, eyes, tongue, ears and skin. The mind relates itself with the five senses, then cognition, perception or knowledge takes place. This knowledge which you get every day from morning until night is dependent on the relationship between the mind, the senses and the object. If there is any dislocation in any of these three, knowledge, perception or cognition will not take place.

This knowledge is called relative knowledge. You can say empirical knowledge, finite or objective knowledge. This is not yoga. You have to turn to the other side; the

mind which was turning out toward the objects must be turned inward. All the senses, all the windows, all the doors, must be closed. Do it by any means. Any guru will teach you. Any teacher will tell you. Of course, every guru will tell you different methods, but there is no harm in it.

The process of going in is one thing and the tools or methods which you use can be anything. These techniques are called the practices of yoga. They are called karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, kundalini yoga, kriya yoga, mantra yoga, hatha yoga. I am just telling you half a dozen of them; there can be as many yogas as there are people. Some gurus teach bhakti yoga; if it suits you, do it. Some teachers teach raja yoga; if it is suitable, if it agrees with your temperament, do it.

These techniques of yoga appear to be different from each other. One guru will emphasize mantra, another guru will emphasize pranayama, and the two disciples will fight with one another. One says, “My guru says pranayama”, and the other, “My guru says mantra”, and they keep on fighting because they do not know what yoga is.

Yoga is a process. You want to climb up to the terrace. You can have a staircase, but if you don’t have a staircase, you have to put a bench or a stool or something like that and climb up that way.

Your own path

When you are trying to go in, you face a lot of difficulties, and these difficulties are related to your own mind. It is like crossing the East German wall: you can’t! The mind will not allow you because this mind is so gross. It is so dissipated. You try to concentrate and at once the concentration breaks. You want to fix your mind on one point and the mind will wander throughout. When you are practising the mantra you will find that the mind is thinking about something else.

These are some of the difficulties related to the mind, body and emotions, therefore the practice of yoga should be chosen according to the gravity of your problem. In the science of yoga they deal with the mind very systematically. When you are able to calm down the mind, then you have inner experiences, because beyond the conscious is the subconscious mind. Deeper than the subconscious mind is the unconscious mind. Therefore, you have to go deep into yourself. You have to transcend the external experience. When you are able to transcend the external experience, then inner experiences begin. Therefore, when you want practise yoga, you must find out a process or technique for yourself. There are a few important techniques of yoga and these can be made common to most practitioners.

Hatha yoga cleansing practices

Now, the basic philosophy of yoga. In yoga they say that this physical body is a composition of two forces known as the life force and the mental force. These two forces are always in conflict with each other. There is no harmony, no concord between the life force and the mental force, therefore either your mind is disturbed or your life force is disturbed. If you can create a balance between these two forces, then one-pointedness will come to you automatically. Therefore, the first practice you should do is the practice of hatha yoga.

The hatha yoga practices are the postures and breathing practices. In hatha yoga they are known as asana and pranayama, but in hatha yoga there are also six systems of purification of the physical body. A practitioner of yoga, a practitioner of meditation and mantra, who wants to sit for half an hour or one hour quietly, must have a pure body.

In this physical body there are three types of humours: phlegm, gas, and acidity. These three must be purified.

When the body is purified, then your meditation is far better and far deeper, so a practitioner of yoga must purify the physical elements of his body in the beginning. The six systems of purification of hatha yoga can be learnt from any expert teacher. You do not need a realized guru for that, but he should be an experienced teacher.

Practices of pranayama

When you are practising hatha yoga you should start with concentration. It can be done with the help of pranayama. There are three practices of pranayama which I will tell you about now. The easiest, finest and best practice of pranayama is to concentrate on your own natural breath. Do it for ten minutes every day. You have to do nothing else. Sit down quietly. Close your eyes, spine upright and straight, hands in the proper position. Fix your mind on the tip of the nose, just watch your breath going in and out, nothing else, just the natural breath.

If possible count: in and out, 1, and in ten minutes it will be 150. When you have finished 150 you will see by your watch that it was ten minutes. Keep on doing this. In the course of time you will see that you will take not 150, but 130 breaths in ten minutes. As the mind becomes quieter, the breath flows slower and slower. When the mind becomes agitated the breath flows faster and faster. So sometimes it can be 160 or 170 and maybe, if you are very good at it, it can come down to 110. When in ten minutes your breath is only flowing 100 in ten minutes, more or less, then you must start another practice.

Practise a mantra, a sound: So with inhalation, Ham with exhalation. So-Ham, with the ingoing and the outgoing breath. You must feel as if you are repeating So-Ham, So-Ham, or Ham and So, Ham-So. While you are doing this practice, gradually the breath becomes slower and slower, and when the breath becomes slow, the brain

becomes slow. The speed of thought, the speed of mind become less and less. When the mind becomes tranquil and calm, you begin to see some sort of visions. When you begin to see the visions, at once stop the practice. Don't continue. Immediately shift your mind from the tip of the nose to the centre of the eyebrows.

In the middle of the eyebrows, practise concentration on a symbol that you have chosen for yourself. If it is a bright star, concentrate on it. If it is a full moon, concentrate on that. If it is a bright sun, concentrate on that. Whatever symbol you have chosen for yourself at that time you must meditate on that, because now your mind has become capable of seeing the object clearly. The psychic visions prove that now your mind has become capable of visualizing the symbol. This is the easiest and best practice.

Now, a little more difficult and powerful practice. With the left nostril, inhale slowly. Stop the breath. Exhale through the right nostril. Stop outside. Inhale through the right nostril again. Stop the breath and exhale through the left nostril. This is called one round. Practise five rounds and no more.

There is a system of inhalation, retention, exhalation, retention. You will have to learn from your teacher with what subtleness, fineness or control you should inhale and retain and exhale. The ratio between inhalation and exhalation must be fixed, and while you are breathing in you will have to count. You can count one, two, three, four, or you can count with the help of the mantra. So, you repeat the mantra three times in inhalation and six times in exhalation.

This pranayama is very powerful. After you have perfected, or after you have made your breathing process better, then you have to add three controls in the body. These should be practised while you are holding the

breath. This is a very important rule in yoga, that when you stop the breath, inside or outside, you must do it with control of three junctions or centres in the body: at the throat, at the navel and near the coccyx. When you contract these three centres you are using three controls. These three controls must be compulsorily practised when you are controlling the breath. After practising the five rounds, concentrate on your symbol.

The third practice is also very powerful. It can give you meditation very quickly, but it has rules and regulations about diet, etc. For the second practice there are a few do's and don'ts, in the third practice there are many. You must practise padmasana, lotus posture. Padmasana is a posture in which Buddha is seated. Then you must fix a mudra with your fingers, either on the knees or together. You must keep your body upright and straight and close your eyes. Then start breathing fast. I did not say very fast, I said fast. If you find it difficult to breathe fast through both nostrils you can do it with one of the two and go on breathing as long as you can: one minute, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, go ahead. When you are not able to do it any more, sit quietly. Concentrate on your symbol. Concentrate on your centre at the mid-eyebrow. It comes very fast, it stays a long time and you can go very deep. After a few months you breathe faster and in the course of months, or years, you go faster, and then as fast as you can, only through the nostrils, not through the mouth, and without making a face and without shaking your body. The body has to be fixed; only the breath has to be faster and faster. Do it for as long as you can. Some people practise it for even half an hour and after that they get samadhi for one hour. They forget everything. The object on which they are concentrating becomes very clear.

This practice demands some rules and disciplines about food and your habits in life. I am not going to tell

you about those rules and regulations because you have to learn through a teacher. Just now I have given you a glimpse of how yoga helps you go deep and maintain the light of your consciousness. Thus there are many important, useful and effective practices in yoga.

Yantra and mandala

Now, about the symbol. There are two types: mandala and yantra. When your symbol has a geometric form it is called a yantra. These are geometric forms, like a triangle, or two triangles intersecting each other, or a circle. Yantras were known to all the cultures, all the tribes of the past. They are universal forces with which you can identify, communicate, or connect yourself. Just as you have radioactive fields and electromagnetic fields, so you have a yantric field with which you can connect.

The other form of symbol is called a mandala. It means a pictorial concept. The picture of your guru, a trident, a flower, the full moon, or the sun, is called a mandala. Mandalas are of two types. One is the photographic or pictorial mandala and the other is like a statue with three dimensions. There are hundreds and thousands of these mandalas; some mandalas are human mandalas, some are animal mandalas. Some are part-animal and part-human mandalas based on anthropomorphic and theriomorphic concepts of reality. It is a very deep subject and I am not going to go into details. When you concentrate on these symbols which you have selected for yourself, then you are finding a base or a way of going into your Self.

The purpose of life

The Self which Socrates talked about is nameless and formless. It is in you, but it is universal, it has no limitation. What is its form? Is it light? Is it sound? Is it knowledge? You have to find out for yourself. Human life has been given to you for that purpose. The purpose of human life

is to know the Self. I will repeat. The purpose of human life is to realize the Self and the purpose of yoga is to help you to realize the Self.

—Discourse at Volos Club: Exoraistiki Leski Volou,
12 May 1984



In this physical body there are three types of humors: phlegm, gas and acidity, so these three must be purified. When the body is purified, then your meditation is far better and far deeper, so a practitioner of yoga must purify the physical elements of his body in the beginning.

What is Yoga?

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

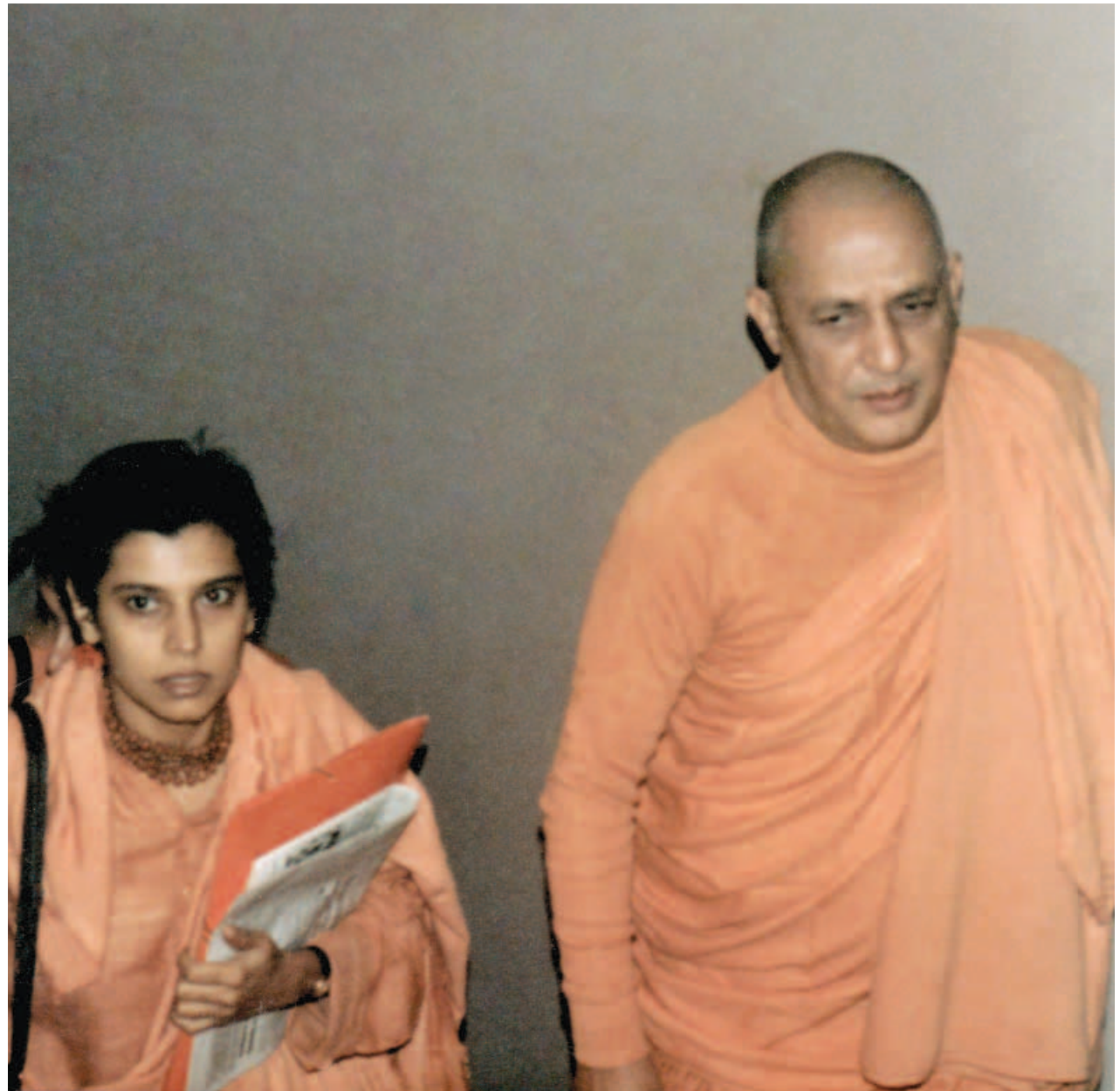
Greece is the land of thinkers, philosophers and great men. It has inspired the whole world in general and western countries in particular, and has guided them in philosophical thinking. The philosophic and diplomatic relationship between Greece and India goes back many hundreds of years. I do not know how many people in this land know about the cultural, philosophic and diplomatic relationship between these two great countries.

Almost 2,300 years ago, when Alexander the Great returned from India, he brought with him his guru whose name was Kalyan. In Greece you call him Kolonos. For him he established an ashram, and wise men from Greece used to visit him from time to time. Also, when Alexander the Great went to India he took many wise men from Greece. With these wise men in his retinue he met many gurus in India and discussed with them the problems of philosophy and spiritual experience.

It is from India that I come to your country. For thousands of years India has been the champion of spiritual thinking and philosophical doctrine. Indian people, Hindus, are very religious people like Christians, but there is a great philosophy which Hindus realized many thousands of years ago, that the reality of the universe, the reality of creation, is inherent in every cell in everybody.

Socrates

In Greece this philosophical thinking was expressed by one great wise man. There is a school of thinking which believes that the mind is ultimate. There is another school of thinking which believes that the body is ultimate. For



those who believe that the body is ultimate and those who believe that the mind is ultimate, there is one section or one type of philosophy. However, there are many people who think and question, "Is the body ultimate and is the mind ultimate? Is this external experience which you have in your daily life ultimate? Is there nothing beyond this?" When the great wise man, Socrates, said "Know thyself", many people and philosophers in this country were puzzled.

In this world there are two distinct philosophies. One group of thinkers believes that what you can experience through your senses, what you can understand in your mind, is all that there is. There is nothing beyond this and you should not worry about it. However, this view of the philosophers has been challenged from time to time by outstanding personalities and philosophers.

Prophets, great saints, wise men and seers were born from time to time to tell us that the physical experience, the sensual experience and the mental experience are not ultimate. All wise men, all saints, seers, avatars and all prophets talk about a transcendental experience. You can even say a divine experience, which means that the objective experiences of everyday life are not ultimate or final, and are not the highest experiences. There is another area of experience which you can have without the body, the senses or the mind, which is superior, higher and transcendental.

This higher experience has been known by various names. Some call it divine experience, some mystic experience. Others call it the Self experience. Buddha called it nirvana. In yoga they call it samadhi and scientists call it timeless, spaceless, absolute experience. This is the experience everyone of you should strive for.

In your life, for thirty years, for forty or fifty years, you are having an experience which is not complete, which

is not satisfying and which is not ultimate. Therefore, many times some of us want to have a deeper, abiding and spiritual experience. This experience, some say is external, some say is internal, but in any case I can tell you that this experience is not individual; it is universal. You are part of the universe. You are not a separate entity and the universe is not different from you, therefore the experience which you have within you is a universal experience or a cosmic experience.

Those people who search for this experience in external entities are called religious people. Christians search for this experience in Christ, in God. Hindus search for this experience in Rama, Krishna and Om. Those who search for this experience within their own selves are called yogis. So, when Socrates said, "Know thyself", he meant that you should be a yogi. Many ways, many techniques, many methods have been found and have been practised in the past, but out of all these it has been said that the yogic method is the best, easiest, safest, surest and quickest.

Yoga

Now, the question comes, "What is yoga?" Is it a religion? Is it a sect? Is it mysticism? Is it a path of heretics? Is it magic? Is it a black art? The definition of yoga is so scientific that even the science of today can understand it in its laboratories. Yoga literally means union. Yoga means connection. Yoga means merging.

When two objects of opposite nature meet each other, that is yoga. The river meets the ocean and merges, that is yoga. In the same way, your small consciousness, your limited consciousness, your empirical consciousness joins universal consciousness, absolute consciousness and becomes one with that, that is yoga. Your little mind, your little ego, your little consciousness, finds it very difficult

to conceive, to think of or to visualize the universal consciousness. You represent individual consciousness or the limited or exoteric consciousness. When you try to withdraw your mind, your consciousness, from objective experience, from external experience and make it internal, then yoga begins.

The search for inner experience

Socrates said, "Know thyself." The Hindus said in the Upanishads, "Know thyself." Two thousand five hundred years ago, Buddha said, "You must know yourself." Many people in India used to ask Buddha how to overcome pain and suffering. Buddha used to give them just one reply, "You must attain nirvana." You must know how to shut your mind for some time and how to open your inner self for some time. But how to shut the outer mind, how to stop the flow of external experiences for ten minutes and how to become aware of your inner Self for some time?

You and many more people are trying to find a way. Humanity today, people in this century, throughout the world, are trying to find a way. Why did people take LSD? You can understand it, you should understand it. They were trying to have an experience which is not objective, which is not empirical and which is not relative. Not only LSD, but people have been taking many other things in order to get out of this experience, in order to transcend this range of experience, in order to jump out of this consciousness and experience something higher.

Every year, millions of people come to India. What for? They don't come there for duties. They don't come there for nightclubs. They don't come there for anything else except for one thing; they know that in India the gurus can tell them the way and the technique by which you can experience beyond the empirical self, beyond the outer self, beyond the object. Thousands of people



from Europe, thousands of people from Asia, millions of people from all over the world, come to India every year, but not to search for employment. When they want employment they go to America and Switzerland. When they want the way of knowing the Self, that Self which Socrates indicated, they come to India. From this you can understand which way your humanity is trying to go. In spite of technology, in spite of the modern culture and civilization and in spite of stark materialism, millions of people today are searching for their Self.

A way open for everyone

Whether you are young or old, married or not, male or female, everyone has the capacity, the possibility, of having that deeper and abiding, higher and absolute experience if they try. This experience which you want to have is a part of the universal experience. It is a part of the cosmic experience. It is a part of timeless and spaceless experience.

Therefore, in India they have formulated a system known as yoga. It is designed for every kind of person, religious or not, disciplined or not, healthy or sick, Hindu or Christian, atheist or theist, with or without political belief or ideology. You may not even want the divine or higher or noble experience, you may just like to improve the condition of the body and the mind, or you may just like to improve the mental power and energy. Yoga is designed for every type, every temperament and every kind of person.

If you want to renounce life and become a monk or a heretic or a recluse, there is a yoga for you. If you want to improve the creative intelligence of the mind, there is a yoga for you. If you want to improve your memory, your willpower or your capacity to work, create, discover or innovate, there is a yoga for you. You may just want to be a good householder, a good husband or an ideal wife,

or maybe you want peace, amity, tranquillity, purity and understanding in your family, there is a yoga for you.

Individual practices

I'm just giving you a brief glimpse of the possibilities, of the practices of yoga which you can enjoy in your daily life, according to your requirements. There are four important yogas, intended for four types of people. For a person who is an out-and-out householder, a worldly type of person who just wants his family to live well, for him there is karma yoga. You practise karma yoga and you will find that the relationship between you and your family has improved.

For the people who want to improve their devotion for God, for guru, for a higher being, for them there is a yoga called bhakti yoga. It is a way by which you can direct your emotions towards divinity and God. A devout Hindu, Muslim or Christian should practise bhakti yoga in order to improve the quality of devotion. Of course, you people may be going to church, or you may pray at night, but God needs more than this. He needs you, not your mind. Your wife needs your true love. Your husband needs your true love. Your children need your true love. Just imagine what God needs from you. The way you give yourself is not love. It is an act. It is a ritual. It is not truth. You have not been honest. Don't mind it if I tell you that you have been a hypocrite. How to be a true lover? How to be a good devotee? You need training and for that you must practise bhakti yoga.

For people who want to control their mind, who want to improve their personality, their character and willpower, for them there is raja yoga. Raja yoga is a special yoga. It is supreme yoga. It is the most scientific, systematic and suitable yoga for the people of today. Why is it necessary for you? Because your minds are

dissipated. You can't concentrate. You can't think on one topic for a period of time.

Your mind is distracted every now and again. We people of today, in this century, are the people who have what is called a monkey mind. Have you seen a monkey? It is the most restless creature in the world. A monkey can never sit quiet. That is the type of mind our generation has. As a result of this type of mind we have so many problems.

In the western countries especially, people have a lot of mental problems. They go to mental hospitals for no reason because their minds are weak. There are so many mental hospitals in western countries that when I came to the West I couldn't believe it. How can people go wrong mentally for nothing? Because the mind is undergoing stress all the time. The scientists have been telling us that tension, stress and strain is causing great damage to the mind of the people today. The science of raja yoga tells us how to control the mind or how to concentrate the mind or how to unite the dissipated energies of the mind.

Raja yoga is also useful for people who want to develop creative intelligence in themselves. Everybody has some sort of intelligence even if it is lying dormant. A carpenter, painter, artist, sculptor, writer or photographer, everyone has intelligence dormant in him, but he may not be able to develop his creative intelligence.

Meditation

Thus, there are many different forms of yoga suitable for everybody, but every form of yoga should lead everybody to one point. That is called meditation. The ultimate goal of yoga is to prepare you for that. Meditation is an experience in which you begin to see the reality within yourself, but just by closing your eyes you can't meditate. Meditation is

a science; it is a technique and if you want to succeed in meditation then you have to follow the system of yoga.

What is meditation? Is it concentration? My answer is no. Is it reflection or a deep process of thinking? My answer is no. Is it becoming unconscious or entering into a state of auto-hypnosis? My answer is no. Then what is meditation? I will be able to tell you a little bit now, but it is necessary for you to study more about it.

Meditation is an outcome of one-pointedness. When your mind continuously thinks of one sound or one symbol or one form for a period of time, then meditation takes place. Therefore, for meditation you have three bases: sound, form and symbol. If you want to succeed in meditation then you have to pick up one of these three, or maybe all three or two of the three.

A sound which is silent or a sound which is audible can be the basis of concentration. This sound is called mantra. Mantra is not a holy word, mantra is the word. Sound is the basis for developing concentration. When you practise the mantra, the sound, then the frequency of the mind increases. The second basis for concentration is form, the form of a man, of an animal, or of man and animal combined together. This is not something which is unknown to Greek people. You know it. You have this in Greek mythology, the anthropomorphic and theriomorphic forms on which you can start your concentration. The third basis for concentration is yantra or geometrical formations. These geometrical formations are known as symbols.

The sound and the form and the symbol are universal formations. In science you have symbols, in astrology you have symbols, this is everywhere. In physics, astrology, or any form of science there is always a symbol denoting the nature of reality. Therefore the form, the sound and the symbol relate with the whole cosmos.

The inner and outer universe

In physics, how do you symbolize light? You denote it by a curve. In modern physics, how do you indicate time and space? If I ask you to draw a map or a picture of time, what do you do? How can you indicate time and space? Will you just draw your watch, numbers one, two, three, to twelve? No, time and space and sound and light have their universal structure. These forms on which you concentrate are not imaginary, not just suppositions, they are connected with the whole universe. This is one thing which people do not know. They talk about the gods and the goddesses of Greek mythology and criticize them, but all these forms in Greek and Hindu mythology relate not only to one particular object, they relate to the whole universe.

One thing you must remember is that the universe is not different from you, it is in you. Whatever is in the universe is in you and is in me. Throughout the whole creation and everywhere, in everything, the whole of the universe is present in microscopic form. That means that you are the cosmos in miniature. You are not different from the universe and the universe is not different from you.

In the same way, you are not different from God and God is not different from you. In the same way, I am not different from you and you are not different from me. The whole universe is like an atom, and by knowing yourself, you know the whole universe.

Going in

Now, how to go in? You know how to go out every day, I don't have to teach you that. How to go in? Pick up one of these three methods. Choose a sound for yourself. Everybody has a sound. You should discover that sound. Sit down once a day for ten minutes and practise that sound, and your mind will explode. You keep your mind moving, don't worry about the mind, because the mind and the Self are not the same.

Mind is a different reality and the Self, the *atma*, is a different reality. When you practise concentration don't worry about the mind. When you practise mantra, don't worry about the mind. Whatever practices of yoga you are doing, don't worry about the mind. Many people become very panicky when they practise a mantra, when they practise a sound, their thoughts surge in them. Instead of thinking of the mantra they keep on wrestling and quarrelling and fighting with the mind and after some time they lose interest.

I can tell you something from my experience. Practise your mantra mentally or out loud. Practise your mantra with the natural breath or with the deeper breath. Practise your mantra in one of the psychic centres of the body, with rhythm or without rhythm for ten minutes. When the mind troubles you, let it. Then you will find that after two months it will start getting better. Your concentration will grow and grow and when your concentration begins to grow, then you will have psychic experiences.

These psychic experiences do not indicate that you have realized the Self, but these psychic glimpses, these psychic visions, indicate that you are improving. At the same time, let me tell you that there are various techniques of meditation, there are various techniques of concentration in yoga and every technique is very important as far as spiritual life is concerned.

People want to experience. They want to experience themselves. They want to experience bliss, peace, completeness, and this is precisely the reason why I am travelling in Greece. I've been to your country many times, but to your town it is the first time. I'm happy that a small town like Katerini has so many people wanting to hear about yoga with rapt attention.

—Discourse at Katerini, Cultural Centre & Politistiko
Kentro, 14 May 1984

Yoga: the Final Experience

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Swami Sivamurti: About two and a half millennia ago, a great man was born here in Macedonia. Well, of course, you know his name far better than I do: Alexander the Great. He left the Macedonian shores and travelled overland, and went as far as North India. He conquered many countries and many peoples on his way. Now, after all these years, there is another conqueror, who is coming the other way, from North India to Greece. Not a conqueror of countries, as Great Alexander was, but a conqueror of hearts. You will start to discover this once you have heard him speak. It is with great pleasure, that I introduce to you, my guru, Satyananda Paramahansa.

Swami Satyananda: I have addressed many big meetings in this city a few years ago. Now I am back. Through my travelling I have met millions of people all over the world, belonging to every nation, every culture, and religion. Throughout the world, millions of people want to know about yoga, to practise yoga, and to experience it. It is, therefore, in the thick of these things, that this evening I talk to you about yoga.

Greece and India

Yoga is not something new that I am bringing to you, to your people, and to your country. Greece has been a land of philosophers and thinkers. It has contributed immensely to the evolution of thought throughout the East and the West. The great wise men of Greece have always reflected, pondered, and tried to discover the truth.



Alexander the Great went to India, and he went on conquering land after land. But, when he returned from India, he did not come as a conqueror. He came back as a conquered one. The Indian philosophy, the vedic philosophy, the Hindu philosophy impressed him so much that he brought a guru, a teacher from India, with him. An ashram was established for the guru in Babylonia. The name of that guru, of that teacher who came with Alexander, was Kalyan, Guru Kalyan. In Greek you call him Kalanos. We also know that during the reign of King Menander, Buddhist gurus visited this country from time to time and one of them was Nagasena.

Greek thinking also underwent catastrophic changes during many periods of history. There was a time when the people of Greece worshipped and believed in the Olympian gods and goddesses. Then they believed in a reality beyond the mind and the senses. Greek mythology is filled with these philosophical facts. However, then came another change, a great change in the philosophical thinking of the people of this country. The thinkers of this country turned their back on the Olympian gods, and began to think about the empirical thought process. When they turned their backs to the Olympian gods and their transcendental realities, they began to talk about

the limited knowledge gained through the mind and the senses, and rejected the objective and transcendental knowledge that was proclaimed by the Olympian gods of Greek mythology.

However, many Greek thinkers kept on questioning the doctrine of realistic materialism and the philosophy which said that objective knowledge is ultimate and there is nothing beyond that. When Alexander the Great went to India, he took with him many outstanding philosophers and wise men from Greece. In India, they had classical and academic encounters with the gurus and wise men. This classical encounter was based on one fact: whether the objective experience is final, or is there something more than that. Is the mind the only tool of knowledge; is the mind the only tool of experience; is the mind the only tool of cognition; or is there something more, something beyond the mind? Finally, Alexander was conquered. He defeated the king of Punjab in a military encounter, but he could not defeat Hindu thinking, because the reality you are talking about, the truth you are talking about, and the facts you are talking about, are pure minds.

There is, of course, a limit to your mental experience. However, you cannot and should not say that there is no other experience other than your mental experience. You cannot and should not say that beyond this material objective universe there is nothing. What you see with your eyes does exist. What you see with your mind does exist. What you can hear with your ears does exist. What you can know, what you can feel with your senses, does exist. But this is not the ultimate. There is something that exists beyond the mind, the senses and the intellect.

Know thyself

“Know thyself,” that was the concept, the philosophy and the statement of Socrates. Of course, the Greek

people did not understand Socrates, because they did not understand what he was telling them. He used to say, “Know thyself.” He did not say, “Know thy mind.” He did not say to the Greek people, “Know thy body”, or “Know thy intellect or emotions.” He was talking about man’s basic existence, or atma, the Self. Of course, Socrates was done in by the Greek people. However, his philosophy is immortal. It is on the basis of this statement, which he made many thousands of years ago, that today, in this country, people have to welcome the problems of the Self. Not intellectually, but through yoga.

With the science of immortality, this question is being raised again and again. For early scientists, everything was matter and nothing but matter. Later, scientists said that energy was inherent in matter. Now they say that matter is a state of energy. Sooner or later, scientists are going to come to the conclusion that not only energy, not only matter, but consciousness is ultimate. This consciousness is beyond the mind, and is a higher consciousness. You can experience it by shutting the mind. If you know how to withdraw the mind, if you know how to hibernate the mind, you can experience pure, deeper consciousness.

The microcosm and the macrocosm

You are an integral part of the whole universe. You know what the universe is? You know what the cosmos is? The totality of all that exists is the cosmos. All that you can see, and all that you cannot see, is the cosmos. This cosmos is eternal; it is infinite. Where is your place, where is my place, and what is my relationship with the universe? Am I an integral part of this universe, or am I separate from this universe? The truth is, me, you and the whole universe, is one body, one unit, one existence. Therefore, the whole universe, the whole cosmos, is pulsating in you. But you can’t experience it, as you have been so

extroverted, you have been so objective, in your belief and your understanding. You keep on looking outside towards the objects of the things on the mind. How to experience this universe? How to experience this totality? How to experience this cosmos which is pulsating in you? Scientists today say that the whole universal process is represented in an atom. I do not want to define this point, this subject, because I believe that everyone knows about it. The most minute atom in this universe is the complete craft of the whole universe, therefore whatever exists in the universe, exists in a tiny atom. This is the view of scientists today.

In the same way, let us make a yogic law, a yogic philosophy, and that is, as is in the macrocosmos, the same is in the microcosmos. This microcosmic reality which you are, which I am, which everything in this universe is, is individual. Due to the process of individuation, we are not able to experience that total, true and deeper reality in us. This individuation is caused due to avidya, ignorance or nescience. There is a limitation, to the capacity of experience in each and every one, due to this individuation so that we are not able to comprehend the universe, the reality of totality, the absolute within us. In fact, there is no external perception, there is no external knowledge, there is no empirical condition. Everything is subjective.

When Alexander the Great was discussing this topic with the gurus in India, the gurus made it very clear to him that every experience, every knowledge, which you have outside through the object, is through the subjective process. It is never objective. It is always subjective.

Three layers of the mind

In yoga philosophy, we do not talk only about the external mind. There are three layers of the mind: the conscious mind, the subconscious mind, and the unconscious mind. The conscious mind is constructed of the experiences

from outside, but the unconscious mind is the receptacle of all experiences. All your pains, all your tragedies, all your comedies, all your experiences, live in the unconscious mind. This particular view is accepted by modern psychology. Dr Sigmund Freud, and the great thinker Carl Jung, and all the philosophers following them, have accepted this basic doctrine of yoga: that the mind, the consciousness, has three layers. These three layers of the mind are responsible for external experiences, for subjective experiences and scientific experiences.

When you want to know the reality, then you have to go beyond these three states of the mind. Therefore, we have to find the way. What is the way to transcend these three layers of the mind? By philosophical discussions you can't transcend them; by discussions and logic you can't transcend them; and by understanding everything about the mind in detail you can't transcend them. In order to transcend the mind, you have to start with the body as, in yoga philosophy, the mind and the body are interrelated and not separate. Thus, even the physical side of yoga, known as hatha yoga, is aimed at transcending, conquering, capturing and passing beyond the mind. Of course, the science of meditation is a great science through which you can comprehend the true view on the mind but, more important before meditation, is the understanding of the body and its relationship with the mind. If we want to realize the higher consciousness, if we want to realize the higher experience, then we will have to practise hatha yoga from the very beginning.

Yoga means union

What is yoga? Everybody has his own definition. Sometimes people think yoga is gymnastics; some people think yoga is like magic; some think it is a religious sect; sometimes they think it is a group of heretics; or

sometimes they think that it is Hinduism. Then, what is yoga? Yoga is a scientific word which means union, union between the two opposing poles of energy. When two people meet, that is yoga. When the river joins the ocean, that is yoga. When the positive and negative wires are connected, that is yoga. In our mind, in our body, there are two forces existing separately. These two forces within the universe, within myself, are known by various names. Some call them individual consciousness and supreme consciousness. When the individual consciousness and supreme consciousness merge with each other, that is the state of yoga. Some say that in this individual, there are two forces: the mental force and the life-force, and these two forces join each other. That is yoga. Therefore, yoga means union between the lower mind and the higher consciousness, the merging of the external experience with the inner experience. How is this process of yoga obtainable? How do you practise yoga? Do you think yoga? Or do you practise yoga?

Yoga is practical and has various forms

Yoga is a practical science. It is not so much a theory. In philosophy, there is thinking, discussion, reflection, study, and investigation. The whole process is intellectual in philosophy. However, in yoga everything is practical. In your daily life, you deal with practices related to the body, the mind and the self. The different forms of yoga are designed according to the temperament or constitution of people, for yoga has to fulfil the demands of human life.

For those who are spiritually-minded, each course of yoga is designed to help them develop their mental power, their willpower, achieve concentration of mind, and develop their power of intelligence. For them a suitable course is designed. However, there are people who want to live a peaceful, simple life with a happy family; they are only interested in

that. Therefore, there are many forms of yoga according to the requirements of people. There are mainly four kinds of yoga: karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, and jnana yoga.

Four yogas

Karma yoga is intended for the people who are dynamic by nature, and who want to work in this world as householders. Those householders who are suffering from problems, confusion, and tension in the family, in their personal life, in their vocation and work, for them is karma yoga. Karma yoga is a yoga for the development of an ideal householder.

There are people who want to develop their devotion, their love towards a higher being, like God and guru. But it is very difficult to channel your emotions towards the higher being. How to express your emotion? How to express the totality of your being? How to express the totality of your devotion to that reality? Our love for God is intellectual, mechanical and denominational. However, there is a form of love where He and I can feel unity towards each other. There are people who want to develop that love; for them is the practice of bhakti yoga.

In the particular century, era, and time that we are living in today, there is a very important yoga which is very useful, and that is the science of raja yoga. Raja yoga is the yoga for our generation, because it deals with the total mind. Raja yoga deals with different forms of your experiences in your day-to-day life. It deals with the action, the reaction, the responses, the consequences of your feelings in day-to-day life.

Scientists, thinkers and psychologists throughout the world today are telling that mankind is making mistakes, suffering and thinking wrongly because of mental stress and strain. If you can minimize these stresses and strains, and if you can minimize these tensions, then many problems of

your life, body, society and personality can be rectified. Many people do not feel stress, but that does not mean they do not have it. This stress is caused by the frivolous activity of the mind, which takes place all the twenty-four hours of the day. Your mind does not get time to rest. You give rest to your body for about eight hours. You give rest to everything in the world, but you don't give rest to your mind.

This is the tragedy of the western culture. The West has ignored the role of the mind in life. It talks about giving rest to the body for six, eight, or ten hours, and it talks about giving rest to the brain for six, eight, or ten hours. Science tells you how many hours a day you should sleep, how many hours a labourer should sleep, and how many hours an old man should sleep, but it does not say how many hours your mind should be given rest. This is precisely the reason why there are horrifying mental cases in the West. In the western world, the statistics of mental cases are horrifying. Why is it like this? Because you do not have a science which tells you how to give rest to the mind.

The mind does not rest when you sleep, the mind does not rest when you take tranquillizing pills, the mind does not rest when you go to the beach or the discotheque, the mind does not rest when you drink or when you smoke hashish. The mind does not rest by any other method except meditation. In meditation, the mind undergoes a state of hibernation. During this period of hibernation, the mental energy is conserved one hundred percent. The western approach to the mind is like a motor car or a tape recorder that is switched on and left running the whole day and night. It ultimately goes flat.

Up until the last century, people in western countries did not even understand if there was a mind at all. Of course, in Greek philosophy they used to say, "I think, therefore I am" but, in yogic philosophy, we say, "I am, therefore I think."

Up until the last century, the scientists, the wise men, the thinkers in this country, did not even understand that it was necessary to do anything for the mind.

For the first time in the West, Dr Sigmund Freud said, "The root cause of your behaviour, your abnormal behaviour, your mental problem, your personality problem, your quarrels, dissensions and conflicts in the family, is in your mind." Dr Carl Jung, who was an outstanding thinker, philosopher and psychologist, said that it is through yoga that the internal discipline of the mind can be communicated.

Raja yoga

How to give rest to the mind? Can you stop the mind? In order to give rest to the mind, you have to stop the mind. In order to save the energy of the battery, you have to switch off the radio or the transistor. What happens when the mind stops? And how to stop it? This is the science of raja yoga. In raja yoga they say that the individual mind must be put in touch with the cosmic mind, and the velocity of the mind must be decreased. I hope you understand what velocity is and what frequency is. The modern mind, the mind of the modern man, has high velocity and negligible frequency. Even in modern science, this has been said. In order to bring time and space closer to each other, the velocity has to be decreased. When the mind has high velocity it is restless, it is full of conflicts, anxiety, fear and passion, and it is nervous. When the velocity increases more and more, there is heart attack. When the mind attains high velocity, then you have high blood pressure. Eighty-nine percent of the diseases today are caused on account of this stress caused by the velocity of the mind. In order to overcome tensions and the stress of life, it is important that you must know how to reduce the velocity of the mind.

To stop the mind is difficult. Not everybody can do it, and not everybody can teach it. But you can definitely reduce the high velocity of the mind. When you reduce the speed of the mind, then your nervous system also gets a rest. The sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system feed the brain. They feed each and every organ of the body. If these nervous systems are overexcited, then it creates suffering for the body. You suffer from heart disease, or blood pressure, or arthritis, or peptic ulcers, or sciatica, or migraine, or lung disease. Therefore, I am going to talk to you about the process of reducing the speed of the mind and finally stopping it.

Pranayama

In order to reduce the speed of the mind, you have a lot of practices. The first and the most important of all the practices is pranayama. Pranayama is the breathing process in yoga. When you breathe faster you think faster, or when you think faster you breathe faster. The other way round: you think slowly, you breathe slowly. If you want to slow down the mental process, then you must breathe slowly. How to breathe slowly? There is a very natural way of reducing the speed of your brain. That is the first practice that I am going to tell you about, and that I am going to teach you now.

Set apart ten minutes of any part of the day. Sit down with your spine straight. Keep your body steady. Close your eyes and fix your gaze on the tip of your nose, and watch your natural breath. You have been breathing unconsciously throughout life since the time of your birth. Now you have to breathe consciously for ten minutes. The breath flows for fifteen rounds in one minute. In ten minutes, it is 150 rounds. You just watch the breath and count the number of times you are breathing. Count until 150, and stop. You don't have to

draw out the breath, it is continuous. You will find after one or two or three months, you are not breathing 150 times, you are breathing 140 times. It can also come down to 120, or 110 times. Now, the law is very simple: the slower the mind the slower the brain, or the slower the breath the slower the mind. The breath influences the mind and the mind influences the breath, and here you are involving both of them. Your awareness is on the tip of the nose, and on the breath. This is one practice. You practise for ten minutes.

After about a year, you may practise for twenty minutes or even thirty minutes. Then you don't have to count. When the breath is going in and when the breath is going out you begin to think, So-Ham, So-Ham; or Ham-So, Ham-So. When your mind becomes very slow, then time and space drift. As a result of that drift, you begin to see visions inside. These visions are not hallucinations, illusions or fantasies. You are wise people, please listen to me very carefully and with an alert mind: when the mind becomes slow, then the autonomous nervous system begins to function. There is the sympathetic nervous system, the parasympathetic nervous system and, in the centre of the spine, the autonomous nervous system. Up to a certain speed of the mind nothing happens, you feel good and relaxed, you feel light and nice, but when the speed of the mind goes much slower, then you begin to experience the rhythm of the autonomous nervous system. These visions, poems, colours, objects, these objective experiences which you have inside you at that time originate either from the subconscious mind or the unconscious mind.

All your repressions are stored in the unconscious mind. Tell me, where do you store the experiences of your happiness and unhappiness? Where do you keep your disappointments and derisions? Where do you deposit

the total of your experiences in this life? Suppose you have experienced pain, then you experience unhappiness. Where does this experience go? Does it get lost in the sky? No, it is in you. It comes back to you in the night, in the morning, many times. That is the subconscious mind and the unconscious mind. Where do nightmares come from? Where does madness come from? Where does violence come from? Where does love, hatred, jealousy, greed, passion and ambition come from? Do they come from the supermarket? No, they come from you.

Purging the mind

When your mind becomes quieter, and very, very slow, then the unconscious mind and the subconscious mind open themselves like flowers. These psychic and subjective experiences of the mind pave the way for the channelling of your repressions. That is purging. You know purging? When your stomach is bad, you purge in the toilet. It is instinctive. When your mind is loaded, or when your mind is constipated, where do you purge it? In yoga there are thousands of methods, and I don't have the time to tell you about them all now.

However, there are three practices which you will have to learn. These are important if you want to deal with the mind and go high in spiritual life. The first is mantra: the sound, not the holy name, not the name of a god or goddess, it is just the sound. It is the sound which represents the universal sound, and it is a product of your own mind. It is not a Greek sound, it is not an Arabic sound, but it is the sound which is deeply inherent in you. You will have to discover this sound, and learn and practise it every day. You don't have to be a believer for this. You may be a believer or not, you may be a puritan or not, you may be a beggar, a heathen, or anyone, but you have to practise the mantra every day.

Mandala and yantra

The second thing is mandala: concentration on a form. Concentration on the form of a man, or animal, or both. These Olympian gods which you had must be called your philosophers; they represent the universe in symbols. There is a sign and a symbol for everything. In modern physics there is a symbol for light. In modern physics there are symbols for so many things. In astrology you have a symbol for all the astrological signs. In the same way, there are many realities, many facts, many things in the universe and there are symbols for them. These symbols are human forms or animal forms. They are called mandalas. Concentration on the mandala puts you in touch with the deep, mystical, mysterious universe.

The third thing is the yantra. Yantra is another symbol of the universe. It has circles, quadrangles, triangles, points. It is not possible for me to tell you in detail of yantra. It is not even necessary. You just have to practise it.

What I am trying to tell you is that first you must learn how to slow the speed of the mind, then there will come a time in your life when you must stop the mind. You don't, you can't, and you shouldn't stop the mind for hours. Even if you stop the mind for a few minutes, a miracle takes place. You can go beyond matter. You can go beyond everything. You can transcend name and form, the body and the mind. This is the ultimate aim of yoga. The ultimate aim of yoga is to help you to realize a cosmic region, or a cosmic knowledge and experience about yourself. This is all I can tell you tonight. I am very happy to be here with you. I am travelling throughout Greece and I have already visited many islands and many places in the mainland, and when I come again to your beautiful city of Thessaloniki, I hope to see you once more. I thank you for your kind welcome and your infinite openness.

—Discourse at Thessaloniki, 15 May 1984

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. I don't really want to say anything, but I really want to let go. I want you to lead me, to understand.

Paramahamsaji: Every day, for ten minutes, try to calm down your mind. Forget all your problems, all your anxieties, then you can be on the same frequency with my mind. When the frequencies of your mind and my mind are the same, then I can flow into you.

In fact, everybody should do it. This is the only way to communicate or be in touch with me. Ten minutes is nothing. In that ten minutes you can adopt any one powerful practice: mantra, bhastrika, pranayama, kirtan, or any practice of concentration. Not all, only one, so that you can keep your mind engaged and controlled. That's all you have to do.

Q. How is it possible to keep the mind empty for ten minutes when thoughts keep coming? Can this be made the best time for repetition of mantra?

Paramahamsaji: It can always be done if you can decide it properly. You must train the mind by suggesting that you can do something for twenty-three hours and fifty minutes, then be alone for ten minutes. There are very strong practices which can control the mind. Bhastrika pranayama can control the mind, or by using any other pranayama you can control the mind for some time. Some can control it by mantra also. There are milder practices, stronger practices and very strong practices.

Q. How can we help mental patients? Can antar mouna help them overcome guilt and give philosophical comfort?

Paramahamsaji: In yoga you do some practices in order to stimulate or excite or express your deeper consciousness. More and more thoughts come to you. They are very disturbing thoughts sometimes. Then in the second stage you have to train the mind to observe them. When you witness your thoughts there is no problem, but when you feel them, then comes the mental problem. So witnessing of the mind is done in three or four stages.

The first stage is to hear or witness or be attentive to all the sounds around you. Only be attentive to sounds like motorcars, knocking at the door, people talking, birds singing. Through this, you accelerate the sensual awareness. In the second practice you bring a thought into the mind voluntarily and then stop it after some time. Bring another thought, think about it, then at one point, stop it. The third stage is when you allow every thought to come in and you go on thinking "I think this", "I think this", "I think this." These practices should be done only for a short period, maybe two or three minutes each.

After this you should try to develop the psychic visions. There are many ways in yoga in which you can develop psychic visions fast. These psychic visions, in the course of time, relax the mind, and sometimes while you are experiencing these psychic visions, the exact cause of the psychosis goes out. It is a chance, nothing is certain. Suppose you have a stomach-ache or nausea or acidity. You take a purgative and go to the toilet one, two, three, four, five times. During that period of purging maybe that which is causing the problem will go out. In the same way, psychosis, neuroses and schizophrenic diseases are caused by a process of thinking, or just by one thought. Sometimes one may explode the whole thing. This is one way.

The second way is the process of jnana yoga. Most mental problems are due to the gap between religion, society and philosophy. I will give you just one example.

Supposing today our society decides that going to the toilet is a sin, or our society decides that sleeping is a sin, it is bad. What will happen? You won't stop sleeping. Well, you can't, because it is natural. You won't stop going to the toilet, as it is necessary and natural, but you will hide it. In the course of time you will do it and you will have guilt about it, but you can't stop it.

In society there are many things which you like. There are many things which you can't stop. You do them and you feel guilty. You get angry and you are guilty about it; you have hatred, you feel guilty; you have passions, you feel guilty about it. These gaps eventually create a split personality.

Why are there so many problems in the West? The whole of the society is a Christian society. They have certain beliefs which are rooted in the Bible, in their religion and in their culture, but in schools, colleges and universities they learn something completely different. What Freud tells, your religion doesn't believe in. Religion says it is bad; Freud says it is good, so you are torn between two philosophies. That is why your young girls and boys don't know what to do.

For one example, Freud says, "Sex gives good health." Religion says, "It is a sin, it is bad." You know the story of Adam and Eve, but now everybody is Adam and Eve here. In the course of time, the unconscious, that is, the religion, and your life which you are practising now, deeply oppose each other. Deep in your mind you are a Christian. All the facts, all the faith of religion is inherent in you, but in society you live, act and behave as Freud has taught. Intellectually you can just squash it, but inside the mind there is a confrontation because deep in your consciousness you are forming two kinds of archetypes. One is the Biblical archetype, another is the Freudian archetype, and they are in constant conflict with each other. That is why there are

so many mental problems in all the countries which are dominated by Christian theology.

India is very poor. We should have more mental cases, but no, we don't have them because we don't believe in sin. We are taught right from the beginning from childhood, that eating, sleeping, fear and sex are natural. Mating, drinking and sexual interaction are natural. There is no harm in them. If you can renounce them, well and good, it will be better. Therefore, there is no conflict in the consciousness.

So, in order to improve the quality of these people it is necessary that you bring about a healthy dialogue between the religious conscience and the mundane conscience. It is also necessary that the concept of God be defined properly.

The western people have always considered God separately, other than oneself. It is necessary that the concept of God be related to the individual. Therefore, religion must have a twofold concept of divinity: God is transcendent, but He is also immanent. When you think God is there and God is here, then these mental problems can be resolved, because when God is here, He is also involved in what you are doing, He is involved in your idiosyncrasies. You must involve God in all the silly things that you do every day, then you feel comfortable because you are not the only sinner, but He is also the sinner. You see, then the mind becomes comfortable.

Now, if you think that God is only there, and that is why I am making mistakes here, you feel very uncomfortable, but when you commit a mistake with Him, then you share the mistake. He shares your mistake. This is basically the eastern philosophy, especially the Indian philosophy. They say, 'Why am I wrong? Don't you control me?' It's a prayer to God. 'You control me, I am not free. Even if I do foolish things I am not free to do them. You are controlling me,

why can't you control me properly? It means you like it. You want me to do this sin. It's your decision; then why should I be punished? You are making me do these things, so why should I be punished?' That is the way to overcome guilt and repentance. This is also how we can treat mental patients with yoga. There has to be a process of giving them philosophical comfort.

Q. I would like to hear a little more about hatha yoga. Mantra and raja yoga are maybe more time-consuming for people in the West. That's why they are not so popular as hatha yoga.

Paramahansaji: Yes, hatha yoga is a very important yoga. The first step in hatha yoga is to practise six techniques which purify the physical body. After these you practise yoga postures and pranayama and when you are well-practised in these you practise the bandhas, the controls in the body. After these you should practise concentration of the mind. After you have achieved success in concentration of the mind, then you should concentrate on the chakras or psychic centres. Then you should practise some mudras which are very important for experiencing the awakening of kundalini. Finally, through the practice of hatha yoga, you can stop the mind completely.

Hatha yoga is a very important yoga, but it takes you only to that point where your mind hibernates. It can take you to unconsciousness, but not beyond. If you want to go beyond the unconscious mind, then you have to take to raja yoga because hatha yoga is mainly concerned with the two flows of energy, the two forces in the body. That is the meaning of hatha yoga. Ha means 'mental force', tha means 'life force'. They are also known as lunar force and solar force. These two flows are physical, physiological, material forces which flow within the framework of the spine. This force is

then distributed throughout the body, to each and every organ, by thousands and thousands of channels.

The purpose of hatha yoga is to purify these channels and make the forces function in complete harmony with each other. When there is disharmony between the mental force and the life force, then you have diseases. Imbalance between the mental force and the pranic force results in psychic or somatic or psychosomatic diseases.

Pranic force is responsible for physical actions like walking, talking, digestion, breathing, sneezing, coughing, etc. The mental force is responsible for mental actions like thinking, seeing, remembering, smelling, understanding, cognizing, listening, tasting, etc. In this body you have two types of functions: physical and mental, but both these functions work in total interaction. In the lungs, in the heart, in sneezing, in coughing and in digestion both the forces are interacting.

If the prana becomes weak the physical functions deteriorate; if the mental force becomes weak, then the mental functions will deteriorate, and both these functions are controlled by a centre in the brain. The controlling centre is the ajna chakra.

Ajna chakra means the centre of command. That means all the commands, all the mandates, all the orders to the different parts or functions in the body are given from that centre or chakra. Not only in human beings but even in animals, the physical, the sensorial or the sub-mental functions are all controlled by ajna chakra. Therefore, in hatha yoga, concentration on ajna chakra, on the eyebrow centre, is considered to be most powerful and necessary.

The six systems or techniques of purification are completely necessary. One practice is called neti, which washes the nasal orifice and passage. It is done with warm water and with cold water, with saline water,

with oil and butter. There are many ways of cleaning according to the nature of the disease. Some practices are therapeutic and some of the practices are just purificatory. The second practice is called dhauti, cleaning the stomach and intestine.

The third practice is called basti. It is a practice by which you treat the large intestine; if infected, it can be the cause of many diseases like fistula, piles, and so forth. When the large intestine has a higher temperature it makes one passionate and sexually-minded, because by sexual interaction you release the heat. Of course sexual action is a natural metabolic action, but if you are able to practise basti the large intestine will maintain a normal temperature. Then you don't have to go in for sexual metabolism.

The fourth practice is kapalbhati, for purifying the centres of the brain, that is, it cleans the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere of the brain like a vacuum cleaner. That is the literal meaning of kapalbhati: vacuum cleaning of the brain. The fifth practice is trataka. Trataka means concentration on one point without blinking the eyes. The last practice is nauli which means total control of the rectus abdomini. This rectus abdomini has to be strong. This kriya is very helpful even for premature ejaculation, because it increases the resistance of the nervous system, controlling the excretory and reproductive systems.

These are the six systems of preliminary purification techniques. Traditionally, asana and pranayama should be practised only after these shatkarma practices but your teacher should tell you which practice you should do; not all the practices are necessary for each individual. So that, in short, is about hatha yoga.

Q. When we are hurt through the ego of another person, does this mean inside us we too have an ego?

Paramahansaji: Yes, of course. Everybody lives with ego, not without ego. If you have no ego then you are either an idiot or you are a paramahansa.

I had a mantra which benefited me very much, but I lost faith in it and stopped it when I discovered by chance that it was the same as my son's, who has a different personality from myself. My mind is rationalistic and also suspicious. I respect yoga but I am critical about the people who represent it. I even get angry and I am very jealous. How can I become more flexible and softer? What can I do without mantra or mandala or yantra?

It is good that you are critical. It is through criticism that knowledge comes. Blind faith and blind belief is not good for evolution, but at the same time you should continue to be an aspirant. If the mantra does not fulfil your faith, don't do it. I won't be angry, because I like you to question. Not because I am wrong, no, but you need to rationalize the whole thing and realize that I was right.

Belief and disbelief are states of your mind and both are necessary for rational and intellectual integrity. Now, I will tell you what you should do. You just chant the mantra Om. It is not a personal mantra, it is impersonal, it is a general sound. You practise the mantra Om in any manner you like and if you don't want to practise the mantra, then you should practise something of hatha yoga. If you don't want to practise hatha yoga, then you should practise concentration on anything you like.

Your belief or disbelief should not make you a loser. You may not like a particular shopkeeper. That's all right, but when you need to purchase something from the shop, you must go there. If you don't go there just because you don't like him, you will be the loser. Therefore the relationship between guru and disciple has to be based on pragmatism.

Belief and disbelief should not be disturbed. Disbelief is a temporary state of mind; if you can renounce a belief you can also renounce a disbelief because that is the nature of man. A person who is rational will go from disbelief to belief and belief to disbelief. However, there are people with closed minds. A person with an open mind will at any time renounce their disbelief.

Concentration is necessary for your mental growth. If sometimes your teacher is not able to satisfy you, you should not mind it. Maybe the teacher is not efficient, or maybe you have a fat ego. It can be anything or it can be both, because many times a man who has a fat ego considers the other person to be an idiot. So you have to come to a point of compromise with yourself and with your acceptance. Taking it for granted that your teacher is inefficient and that you have a fat ego, what should you do? It is better and safer to think, "I am egoistic and he is not inefficient." This is the approach to rational humility. Anybody who claims to be rational should also know how to be humble. By a rational process you can create humility in yourself.

Humility is not inferiority. I am repeating it, humility is not inferiority, especially rational humility; it is a noble quality. A man who can think and analyze, if he can become aware of his rational limitations, he can accept that he has rational limitations. If he can accept, if he can believe that he also has rational limitations, he can become humble. "I can think very well, I know many things", that is one way, called rational conviction. "But I don't know everything, there are many things which I don't know", that is called rational humility. Rational conviction and rational humility must be blended together, then you become softer and more flexible.

—Satsang at Hotel Nepheli, Thessaloniki,
16 May 1984.

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. Recently in a satsang you said that the devotee should not consider that he is in God, but that God is in him. Could you speak to us more about this and how these two statements differ?

Paramahamsaji: A devotee, a bhakta, should consider that God is in him. As he grows high in his devotion he begins to feel that he and God are one. A devotee feels three different relationships with God according to his evolution. As long as the devotee lives in the gross mind and on the gross plane, he considers himself different from God and he considers God different from him. When he grows in his devotion he begins to feel that he is a spark or aspect of God. Then, he begins to feel that God is in him. In the final consummation of bhakti, of devotion, this distinction between God and devotee is completely lost. In the final consummation of bhakti, God and his devotee are experienced as one.

In the Bible also there are statements. The first statement is, "Father in Heaven." This means, different from me. The second statement is, "Thy kingdom come." That means that You are in me. The third statement is, "I and my Father are one." This is the experience of the highest culmination of bhakti. So, according to the state of devotion, you have the experience of your relationship with God.

If you think God is separate from you and you are separate from God, then you are in the elementary stage. When you begin to feel that He is in you, then you are experiencing yoga. However, there comes a moment when this distinction, this duality is lost. Therefore, there is no difference in the various statements that I make from time to time.

God is a very difficult question. Everybody thinks about Him according to his state of mind. That means your concept of God is in your own image. God should be considered as transcendent and immanent. Transcendent means beyond you and everything. He is beyond the mind. He is beyond the body. He is beyond the universe. That is called transcendent, but that is not the ultimate definition of God. God is immanent. He is omnipresent. He is in each and everything. Every atom of creation is permeated



by divinity, therefore He is also in you. A jnani, a man of knowledge, a man of experience, considers God as being in him, but at the same time he prays to Him because he thinks He is transcendent as well.

There is the science of bhakti yoga which speaks about your relationship with the divine. Your relationship with the divine is bhakti yoga, but then you need not consider Him as something transcendental. You can consider Him as your friend. You can consider Him as your father or even as your lover, your beloved. You can establish any relationship with God. Many saints in the past considered God to be their husband. In India there was a lady saint called Mirabai, she considered Him to be her husband.

You can express your emotions to God in any form you like, in any form you can. It is not important what you consider Him to be. The important thing is that what you consider Him to be should consume your whole mind. Whatever emotion you choose for God should be a powerful one. That emotion towards God which you have established should be able to consume the whole of your mind. Half of the mind to God and half of the mind to the world, that is fifty percent bhakti yoga.

Just as fire burns paper, cotton and wooden fuel, in the same way love for God can make you forget all your problems. You go to sanctum sanctorums, you go to chapels and churches, but nothing happens. You can't forget any problem of your life at all. Why? Because your love for God is not true. Do you love God as much as you love your child? Do you love God as you love your boyfriend or your girlfriend? No, definitely no! If you loved God as much as you loved your nearest and dearest one, you would not come here, people would go to you.

There are two forms of bhakti: the lower bhakti and the higher bhakti. The bhakti which you practise every day is the lower bhakti. Higher bhakti and jnana are one.

What is jnana? Supreme knowledge, supreme experience, higher experience, that is called jnana. When you can give your heart, when you can give all your emotions, when you can give all your passions to God, then you start becoming a jnani. Therefore, in practising devotion, you must channel your emotional attitudes.

How many emotional attitudes are there, do you know? Parents love children, that is one emotional attitude. Friends love friends, that is another attitude. A passionate man loves a girl, or a passionate girl loves a man, that is the third attitude. You hate somebody, you don't like him, that is also an emotional attitude. Now, you will have to find out how many emotional attitudes a human being has.

All these emotional attitudes which you have in your worldly life must be directed towards God. It is easy to pray, "You are my father, you are my mother, you are my friend, you are my this and you are my that." That is only lip service. If you feel for God as you feel for your wife and husband, or you feel for God at least as you feel for your enemy, everything will be solved.

What is the purpose of all this? To consume the mind, to forget the ego, to transcend oneself, to obtain inner experience. Therefore, the path of bhakti is very difficult. It is very easy to go to a sanctum sanctorum. You can go every Sunday or every Monday. It is easy to pray. It is easy to read Ramayana, Gita, Koran, Bible. That is a different thing. That is good, but nothing beyond good. If you want something to happen in your life, you have to think in terms of true bhakti.

Q. What is familiarity and how does it spoil a relationship?

Paramahamsaji: Why do you ask me that question? You have that experience with your husband, with your wife,

with your children, with your people. Familiarity breeds contempt because the people who are familiar with each other are not perfect. If we were perfect, then familiarity would breed respect. If you live with your guru, who is perfect, you would not feel that. The husband is imperfect and so is the wife, and so there is that contemptuous attitude. Therefore, people who live together and are familiar with each other must be very careful with their personality.

Q. What did Christ mean when He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit"?

Paramahamsaji: Christ said that people were blessed and fortunate who had certain qualities. Those people who are very humble are very great, therefore those people who are poor in spirit are humble people, they are not arrogant or egoistic. When you practise bhakti and devotion, the mind withdraws itself and a time comes when you become mindless. When you become mindless, then the divine grace becomes perceptible.

Q. Can you please talk about the relationship between guru and disciple?

Paramahamsaji: Guru and disciple are two spiritual relationships and they have a very important duty towards each other. The disciple's duty is to strive to realize the higher experience through the instructions of the guru. In the same way, the duty of the guru is to guide his disciple during the spiritual journey. It is not a physical or emotional or social relationship. The spirit of the guru, the Self of the guru, the Self of the disciple, are in this relationship.

I have published a book in English, Light on the Guru and Disciple Relationship, which will soon, I hope, be translated into Greek. You should read that book because

that speaks about many more things that should happen between guru and disciple.

Q. Why is the spiritual path so difficult, especially in the beginning?

Paramahamsaji: The nature of the mind is to stay outside. Even if the mind wants to look inside, your senses draw you to external experiences. The mind finds it very easy to have gross and objective experiences, but when you try to go inwards and peep into yourself, then the mind finds it very difficult because it is not used to it.

Q. Please speak to us about your early stages in spiritual life.

Paramahamsaji: I had the first spiritual experience when I was six years old and then it came to me again and again. I consulted everybody. Finally a tantric yogini, a female yogi, came to our family. She gave me the necessary training into the path of yoga and tantra. After that I decided to follow the spiritual path only, because it was very important for me to find a guru for myself. I left my people and went in search of a guru.

I met many wise people, many saints and scholars, and finally I discovered my guru in Swami Sivananda. After that I resigned everything to him, that's all! I lived with him for twelve years. I travelled through the world as a beggar and a mendicant for about eight years and I have visited practically every place in the world. Now I do not feel any difference between higher experience and lower experience. I don't see that line of demarcation between this life and that life.

Q. What is the real meaning of responsibility?

Paramahamsaji: The real meaning of responsibility means to do what your mind thinks should be done. There is no ultimate form of responsibility. You have created a

problem and you feel yourself responsible. The problem is created by you, the whole drama is created by you, the whole mistake is made by you and then you try to create an idea of responsibility. Therefore, responsibility is an idea. Some people accept it, others don't.

My father gave me birth and he tells me that I have a responsibility towards him. I cannot accept it. Why did he create me at all? I did not ask him to do it. I was born out of his passion. If he would have been a brahmachari, I would not have been born. So, responsibility is a very illogical social concept. Children think their parents are responsible and parents think the children are responsible. The husband tells the wife she is responsible, the wife tells the husband he is responsible. The government says the citizens are responsible and the citizens say the government is responsible. It is a good way of exploiting others. If you want to exploit your wife you say, "You have responsibility towards the children."

The whole of life is lost in chasing the shadow. You never come to an ultimate point of responsibility. Where does your responsibility begin and where does it end? Life has to be planned properly. This program of life accepts the idea of responsibility, even if it is a myth or exploitation.

For twenty-five years after the date of marriage you are responsible. It is too much. Twenty-five years is too much. You must say twenty years is enough responsibility, you can stretch it to another five years. So you get married at the age of twenty. By forty-five you must renounce responsibilities. If you do not renounce them, you will get sick. You will have blood pressure, heart problems, migraines, or nervous breakdowns.

You must relax after twenty or twenty-five years. That is called planning life. You go endlessly with this idea of responsibility until you are thrown into the grave. That is why there are so many mental problems and conflict in

the family and in society. Old people interfere too much. After forty-five you should not interfere with your family, but I know that you will not be able to do it because 'responsibility' is a hypnotic mantra. It keeps you in high spirits, it keeps your mind under constant stress, and you like to feed your ego, therefore you say "It is my responsibility."

Up to the point of marriage, children should not be told about responsibility, then they will have a normal psychological frame of mind. You go on brainwashing them from the age of twelve about responsibility, you indoctrinate them, so they have psychological problems. Childhood is for play and freedom. Married life is for enjoyment and disillusionment.

After you turn fifty, you must practise yoga. Go to an ashram and live there. Develop your spiritual knowledge, live a simple life and, if you happen to live until seventy-five, then you should become a sannyasin.

Once my grandmother told me about this. I was planning to leave my family. My father agreed, my mother agreed, my grandmother said, "But you have not completed your responsibilities." I said, "What responsibilities? Should I marry?" She told me, "Marriage is also a responsibility." I told her, "I don't agree. My father has fulfilled that responsibility and now you are multiplying the responsibility."

Q. Could you please tell us about the time you spent in isolation?

Paramahansaji: I spent nine months in total isolation. I never saw any man's face, did not see a bird, did not see a tree, did not see the sun and the moon. Do you know where it is? I will tell you the story.

I went to a place in the Himalayas which is the origin of the Ganges River. It is about four thousand feet above sea level. There is perennial snow there. The Ganges water

is very cold. Many yogis, swamis and sannyasins live there during the period between March and September. After September they come down to a warmer place. When they went down to warmer places, I stayed there all by myself.

I had rooms and a fireplace. I had collected a lot of firewood to last for nine months. I had also collected potatoes, wheat flour and a few things that could be preserved, like sugar. I wanted to do the special practices, the prolonged practices of pranayama. For a little bit of pranayama every place is all right, but if you want to practise pranayama for many hours, then you must go to a very cool place, because pranayama creates heat in the body. The process of oxygenation in the body is accelerated. As a result the body can suffer if you practise too much pranayama in a hot place.

The yogis go to the Himalayas and there in the high altitude, they practise pranayama. Besides, you don't have temptations there. There is nothing, therefore you can't desire. So I went to that place in order to practise pranayama for a prolonged period because I wanted to open the doors of the inner chamber. I wanted to see the inner experience outside.

In India we call it darshan. Darshan means to see your spiritual self outside. It can happen, it happens, through the practices of pranayama, because when you practise pranayama the mind is brought under total control. The mind stops functioning. You enter into a state of trance or samadhi. You enter into a state which is like unconsciousness but you are not unconscious, you are entering within yourself; your inner awareness is total.

So, during those nine months I practised pranayama, I lived in total isolation. I did not go out of my room at all. I did not take a bath for nine months. Can you imagine how difficult that is for an Indian? Indians must take a bath once every day, twice, thrice or even five times a

day! I always lived in my lotus posture and practised pranayama.

However, besides this long isolation of nine months, I have also practised some three days or four days in seclusion. Please don't try it!

Q. Can you tell us about the tattwa shuddhi techniques and why the time for it is now?

Paramahamsaji: Tattwa shuddhi is a tantric practice done in order to purify the elements of the body and the mind. The physical body is composed of five elements. The mind is composed of three gunas. If the five elements and three gunas are not purified, experiencing meditation and higher experience becomes very difficult. Therefore, before you take to any higher yogic practice, it is necessary that the constituents of the body, that is, the five elements, be purified.

These five elements which constitute the body influence the mind also; they are: akasha, ether; vayu, air; agni, fire; apas, water; and prithvi, earth. These five elements are the primordial elements of universal nature and by a process of quintuplication, the whole world, the whole cosmos and the whole creation come into being.

In the human body these five elements control the functions of various organs like eyes, nose, etc. Various functions in the body like respiration, circulation, excretion, so on and so forth, are controlled by the state of the five elements. These five elements are disintegrated and go back into their own source in the universe after the body is consigned to the fire. These five elements, when they are permuted and combined by a process of quintuplication, become many minor tattwas or elements. The purification of the tattwas is done by a process of mantra and yantra. After the purification has taken place, then you should practise meditation or any other practice you like.

Q. Is it possible to arrive at supreme knowledge without the guidance of a guru? Is it possible to follow the spiritual path without the guidance of the guru?

Paramahamsaji: For spiritual life the guru is a must, otherwise you will encounter too many difficulties. In fact, in the path of yoga, in the path of spiritual experience, a guru is a prerequisite. We are ignorant people. We have so many limitations in our lives. We are not sure that what we are doing is right. We read from a book and then we put it into practice, but please remember that in books everything is not written. There are many details which are not written in the book. It is safer to travel in spiritual life with a guru, but many people don't like to have one; let them try it!

Q. Can you explain the life of sannyasa and what a sannyasin is?

Paramahamsaji: The literal meaning of sannyasa is total dedication. Sannyasa is taken in order to achieve the higher experience of life. When we are sure that our spiritual aspirations are genuine, then we take to the path of sannyasa. Sannyasa is of two types: one for the householder and the other for those who don't want to become householders.

Those who are householders, live the life of a sannyasin although they live as householders. That is called karma sannyasa. They don't renounce actions, they don't renounce family, they don't renounce relationships. They renounce the attachment, they renounce the identification, they renounce unnecessary neuroses, they disidentify from the fruits of action.

The karma sannyasins live like you, but in their own mind they are guided by a higher philosophy. They question, "Why do I work? What is the purpose of life? What is the purpose of karma? What is the

purpose of emotion and passion? How should I handle the results of life?"

Every action produces a result; love produces a result; hatred produces a result; success and failure produce a result or an effect. When you are happy or when you are unhappy it produces an effect. How should you handle that situation? A karma sannyasin does it. He tries to live as a householder and express, exhaust or finish his karma and he does not create more karma. By detachment, by disidentification, he stops the further process of karma. This is called karma sannyasa for householders. Any householder, married or unmarried, young or old, can have karma sannyasa.

Then there is sannyasa. It is for those people who do not want to be householders. They do not want to own property, they do not want the positions of the world. They want to devote all the energies of the body and mind towards the achievement of that higher experience. Then they live with their guru. For at least twelve years they serve their guru, they discipline themselves, they live a simple life, they live on a sattwic and frugal diet. They try to practise what I would call purity of mind. They wear this dress, guru, and by serving the guru they complete the cycle of their karma. After living with the guru for a particular period of time, at least twelve years, they are free.

A sannyasin's life is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is with the guru, service of guru: discipline yourself, have experiences. Then keep on moving, travelling like a beggar: erase your ego, learn humility. People will insult you, people will not give you respect. They will see a man coming with a shaven head, in rags. They will say, "Get out, don't come here." Some will say, "He is a heretic." Somebody will say, "He is CIA"; somebody says, "He is KGB." You will be a victim of suspicion from everybody.

That is good training, because everybody wants respect and honour; everybody wants to be welcomed. Therefore, they dress well, they have a nice haircut, they should look well no matter how dirty they are inside: up-to-date, tip-top gentlemen. However, a sannyasin does not live like that. He must train himself to shun respect and honour, only then will the fat ego become slim. The ego is the greatest enemy of a disciple, of a devotee. We make many mistakes through the ego, you know it. We are affected because we have the ego. We get a nervous breakdown because we have the ego.

After travelling like a beggar, like a mendicant, for some time, he must sit down at some place quietly and practise sadhana. He should practise incessant meditation. He should eat only once a day. He should not preach. He should not talk like a parrot all the time. He must learn, he must experience in meditation. Then something happens to him. He has a deeper experience. After that he is free, he can do what he likes. These are the four stages in the life of a sannyasin.

—Satsang at Satyananda Ashram, Panorama, Thessaloniki, 16 May 1984



Press conference

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. Can the modern technological discoveries and life be incorporated into yoga?

Paramahansa ji: Yes, the modern way of life and yoga can not only go hand in hand, but yoga is very important and very necessary, indispensable for modern life. Modern technology and modern civilization have caused stress and distress and many diseases. It has been found by scientists that through the practices of yoga these stresses can be minimized, or helped.

Q. Does yoga have any relationship with metaphysics and do metaphysical elements that exist in the various religions exist similarly in yoga?

Paramahansa ji: Yoga is a practical science. It is a system of techniques and practices related to the body, emotions and various stages of mind. Yoga has a philosophy which is based on modern scientific principles so that modern science and yoga almost speak the same language. Yoga is not a religion or cult, and it is not only metaphysics. It mainly deals with the problems of body, emotions, mind, and the problems of your spiritual quest, if at all you have one.

Q. Every science brings in something new which transcends existing theories, sciences and philosophies. Does yoga as a science do that? Does it bring something new in and also does it have axioms, things that it accepts from the beginning as being correct?

Paramahansaji: Yoga has brought something very important for man today. It says that the root cause of man's restlessness lies within himself. So far people were attributing the cause of their suffering to the objective circumstances, but yoga has proved, by various studies, that the root cause is within one's own self. The second important thing which yoga has brought is that every person, whether he is a theist or an atheist, can grow in his life and in his spirit. This is something very important which yoga has contributed to the science of human growth. The third important thing that yoga has contributed is that, if you can concentrate your mind, you can influence the events of your life.

Yoga does not have any preconceived philosophy. Those who believe in religion and those who do not can practise yoga. Those who believe in morality and those who do not can practise yoga. Those who believe in higher spiritual life and those who do not can practise yoga. Therefore, it has no preconceived axioms or philosophy.

Q. Can a person come to perfection through paths other than yoga?

Paramahansaji: So far no path has brought man to perfection. There are only a few paths which we know. One is the path of religion; it has only caused wars and destruction. Second, mysticism, which is difficult for an average person. The third is philosophy, that is very abstract, not everybody can understand it. The last one is yoga, which is easy.

You don't have to be an intellectual to practise yoga. You don't even have to understand it, just as you take medicine from a doctor without it being necessary for you to understand it. The doctor knows about it, you don't have to know about it, you take it and you are benefited. In the same way, you have to practise yoga to



get the benefit. It is not necessary for you to know about it intellectually or even rationally.

Q. The source of yoga, is it the ascetics in any religion and Gnosticism?

Paramahamsaji: The source of yoga is man's own experience. Of course ascetics also practised yoga, Gnostics also practised yoga, but it does not mean that they can be the source. By observation and study they found that the physical body and the mind have certain laws and certain systems, or certain sciences. They found how the body is affected by hormones, the endocrine glands, the nervous system, how a restless mind causes nervous problems, and what type of mind the people who commit crimes or suicide have. It is on the basis of this observation and study that the path of yoga gradually developed.

Q. Do the followers of yoga have problems in their contact and relations with the already existing state of things in society, which is a society full of contradictions?

Paramahamsaji: That is the only speciality of yoga. Those who follow yoga purely have no problems with society, because yoga accepts the whole range of evolution in man. The goal of yoga is perfection, but it accepts that an imperfect man is at some scale of evolution. Yoga wants everybody to become perfect, but at the same time it knows that it is not possible. However, it is possible that we grow. I start walking, you start walking, he starts walking.

In yoga, more important than growth is peace of mind. That's most important. Everybody needs peace of mind. A criminal, a clergyman, a multi-millionaire, a poor man, want peace of mind. This peace of mind is the central note in yoga, therefore the question of expectation does not come.

Q. Do the followers of yoga have neuroses?

Paramahamsaji: Of course. Why not? At different levels people have their own experiences. A man might be having a physical problem. He practises yoga and becomes healthy, but then he has mental problems, he has a problem with his personality. The practitioners of yoga belong to different scales of evolution, but after some time, when they are able to achieve good concentration of mind, they have no neuroses.

Q. Why is yoga for vegetarianism?

Paramahamsaji: There are various stages of yoga. In some forms of yoga there is no restriction, there is no regimentation, but if the patient is suffering from some disease, such as arterial blocks, then there are disciplines and restrictions. For those who want to practise pranayama for higher concentration, vegetarianism is a must. Therefore, according to the necessity and need of the aspirant, some sort of disciplines are there.

Q. Do you believe in what Maharshi and Rajneesh are doing, because they are assuming an important position in the world today?

Paramahamsaji: You are asking about Maharshi Mahesh Yogi and Acharya Rajneesh. Both of them have influenced the young and the modern generation to a very great extent. The idea of transcendental meditation initiated by Maharshi Mahesh Yogi has done such a wonderful job that many scientists throughout the world are working on the possibility of meditation therapy.

Formerly people thought that meditation was for nuns, recluses or some sort of spiritual people. Now the scientists are telling us that meditation is therapy of the mind, emotions and personality. Through meditation you

can also improve your creative intelligence, your capacity to act and to innovate. It has inspired millions of people throughout the world.

Acharya Rajneesh has revolutionized the whole concept because people thought that if you want to go high in spiritual life you have to be sad, you have to be melancholic, you have to be quiet, you have to be pure, you are not to do this and not to do that. That meant the path of truth and enlightenment was only for a few people and not for everybody. Through his initiation, he made it possible to make people believe that everybody can walk towards spiritual enlightenment. For that one does not have to make a change in one's external life. Therefore, these two personalities have done historical work for the welfare of humanity. That is, in brief, my opinion.

—Alexandroupolis, 17 May 1984

In yoga, more important than growth is peace of mind. That's most important. Everybody needs peace of mind. A criminal, a clergyman, a multi-millionaire, a poor man, want peace of mind. This peace of mind is the central note in yoga, therefore the question of expectation does not come.

Yoga: Our Precious Heritage

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

I have been travelling in Greece for almost a month, and I have visited many of the islands including Crete, Rhodes, Mitilini and important towns and cities on the mainland. Alexandroupolis is my last destination this time in Greece, as I will soon be departing for Italy and other countries in Europe. I have been travelling throughout the world for many years. My travels have led me to distant lands and remote islands. I have also visited the Eastern block of Europe, and the Soviet Union as well.

During my travels I have met millions of people, and have come across intellectuals, scientists, scholars and philosophers. I have discussed with them the science of yoga, and its relevance to daily life. In the last three or four decades, scientists have turned their mind towards understanding yoga from a scientific point of view. To the western world, yoga was, for a time, equated with religion, asceticism and magic. However, scientists began to question if yoga was relevant to man and his intimate problems.

Spread of yoga to the West

Some of the wise men from India have visited western countries in the last one hundred years. One of them was Swami Vivekananda who went to America in 1893. But he was not the only person, many more came from India who were not known by the newspapers, radio, or television. When I visited Sweden, about eight years ago, I saw in a family book the autograph of an Indian yogi who visited

Sweden in the early twentieth century. Paramahansa Yogananda was a great inspirer of classical yoga methods in America (1920) and in Latin America.

In the beginning, western scholars thought that we were talking about a philosophy or a religion, but you know what the mentality of a scientist is? There is a great difference between the mentality of a scientist and a religionist. A religionist, if he does not believe in a thing, will just reject and criticize it, but the scientist has a different way. Whether he believes or does not believe, he will first investigate.

Investigation and scientific studies on yoga were carried out in many countries, including America, the Soviet Union, Poland, Japan and India. Now, the position is very clear: scientists throughout the world have declared, in unambiguous terms, that yoga is relevant to man's present problems. As a result of this, many hundreds of thousands of yoga schools and yoga teaching centres have opened up in every country. Most of these centres teach yoga as yoga therapy. Many centres of yoga teach yoga for controlling and disciplining the mind. There are quite a number of yoga centres, throughout the world, that cater to the spiritual needs of the people. Therefore, I have been talking to people about yoga, and inspiring them to practise it. The question can naturally arise, "Why should I do yoga? I am not keen on spiritual experiences. I am not keen on acquiring the knowledge of the universe. I have physical disabilities. I have a poor, weak and sick mind. Is it possible for yoga to help me?" I tell such people, "Yes, it is possible."

Four main forms of yoga

There are various forms of yoga. This is the first important thing that everybody has to understand about yoga as, many times, when you think about yoga, you think about

exercises. Or sometimes, when you think about yoga, you think about meditation with crossed legs and eyes closed. Yoga is a general term, just like the word 'education'. What is education? There are many faculties within education: the arts, commerce, science, etc. In the same way, yoga is a general term meaning various faculties. These faculties of yoga are mainly classified into four divisions. So, there are mainly four types of yoga. These forms of yoga relate to various aspects of man's personality. Man is a combination of body, mind, emotion, intellect, and also circumstances. Therefore, there are different types of yoga suitable for one, two, or more parts of his personality.

Karma yoga is for a person who is having problems with his life, his family and with his relationships. There are other forms of yoga, such as bhakti yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga, which are related to the emotions, mind, and intellect. It is not possible for me to deal with every form of yoga in this lecture. I just wanted to tell you that there are many forms of yoga for one to practise, according to their inclination.

Hatha yoga

There is one form of yoga which is immediately practical and possible for everyone today. This form of yoga has become very important throughout the East and the West, in fact, throughout the world. This is hatha yoga and it is the foundation of every form of yoga. Whichever form of yoga you want to practise, whether it is raja yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga, kriya yoga, kundalini yoga, or any other form of yoga, the foundation of every form of yoga is hatha yoga. Hatha yoga is practical and easy, because you don't have to deal with your mind. The mind is undisciplined; the mind is out of control. Therefore, when we practise any yoga related to or linked with the mind, we have a lot of difficulties. However, in hatha yoga you

deal with the body, and you do not consider the body as just an aggregate of bone, flesh, blood and marrow.

The theory of hatha yoga is that, in this physical body, there are two forces: the mental force and the life force. In hatha yoga, these forces are not abstract forces. They are tangible, objective and real forces. Just as you have a force in electricity, or in an electric cable, or in a battery, in the same way, you have these two measurable forces in the physical body. These forces control each and every function in the body.

How many functions do you have in your body? All the functions which you have throughout your life in this physical body can be categorized into two. One function is known as the physical or biological function, the other function is known as the mental function. Through these two functions, you have the psychic and the somatic personality. Therefore, the personality is psychosomatic. This is the primary hypothesis of hatha yoga. When there is an imbalance between these two forces in the physical body, then you have either physical problems, mental problems, emotional problems, or personality problems. Therefore, it is necessary that these two forces, which are tangible and real in your physical body, must be looked after, and there should be harmony and a proper balance between the two.

Purification practices

Harmony between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, between the pranic or life force and the mind force is the etymology of hatha yoga. Therefore, certain practices are done in order to create that balance.

First of all, there are six practices of purification. These practices concern the body. Through these practices, various limbs, organs and systems of the body are purified. When your body is purified of all the toxic matter, then

your nervous system acts in balance. The toxic matter lies within the body and, as a result, an energy block takes place, and due to this physical block, you have physical as well as mental problems.

Yoga postures

After purifying the physical body through the six techniques, you practise yoga postures. These physical postures are very important and very intricate. They have a direct bearing and an intimate relationship with the endocrine glands of the body. They are able to create some impact on your health and on your physical system. According to the state and needs of one's physical body, some yoga postures can be practised every day. Through these yoga posture practices, you are able to clear the energy blocks in the body. The time taken is very little.

There have been many scientific investigations on the effect of yoga on the body. How do the yoga postures affect the body? It has been found that yoga postures encourage more efficient use of oxygen, and also help in the management of cardio-vascular diseases. Many experiments have been conducted in many countries on these postures. It has been found that each and every yoga posture has a definite effect on the physical body. In many countries they teach yoga to patients suffering from multiple sclerosis, or to people suffering from chronic illnesses.

Pranayama

After practising yoga postures, you must start the practice of pranayama. Pranayama is breathing techniques. The breath is immediately related to the lungs, the heart and the brain. When you control your breath, you control the rhythms of the brain. When you are able to rectify the process of your breathing, you can rectify the nature of your mind.

You breathe through the left nostril and through the right nostril. Each nostril is directly related to the left and

right hemispheres of the brain. When you breathe through the left nostril, the right hemisphere is influenced. In the same way, when you breathe through the right nostril, the left hemisphere of the brain is influenced. It was found that during the practice of pranayama, the brain becomes very, very active. Therefore, the practice of pranayama is not only a lung exercise, but also an exercise for the brain. In pranayama you inhale, then retain the breath, and then exhale. During these three practices of breathing: inhalation, retention and expiration, you are indirectly dealing with your brain. Formerly, people thought that pranayama was good for the lungs and they used to practise it for fresh air and refreshing the lungs. However, when the effects of pranayama were being assessed by scientific instruments, they found that during the practice of pranayama the brain showed special activity. Therefore, people who suffer from nervous depression can gain great benefit through the practice of pranayama.

Ultimate purpose of yoga

What is the ultimate purpose of yoga? Of course, we practise yoga for the body and mind. However, yoga has something more to offer. Everybody is searching for something beyond the body, and beyond the mind. For many, many centuries, we have learned about the universe, and we want to know if we are part of the universe, or if we are separate from it. If I am part of the universe, how am I going to experience it?

The practices of yoga ultimately lead you to this higher, universal and cosmic experience. Thousands and thousands of people are trying to have some sort of experience which is beyond the mind. Even those who do not know about yoga are also searching. They also desire for some sort of super mental experience. Of course, it has been believed that objective experience is

the ultimate experience. Early Greek philosophers only believed in objective experience.

Even Aristotle, in his early days, believed in objective philosophy. Later he wrote a separate book on the philosophy of achromatic and epoptic sciences. He wrote about these two areas of knowledge when he was in India. On his way back, Alexander wrote a letter to Aristotle about it. He wrote, "Why are you giving out the mysteries to the common people?" Not everybody deserves this knowledge or this vidya." Aristotle replied, "Yes, I am revealing the achromatic and epoptic systems of knowledge, because I know nobody can learn it from books. Only those who are initiated can understand it." Even a philosopher and scholar like Aristotle, who only believed in objective experience, changed his opinion in his later years.

There is another group of philosophers who believe in subjective experience, and they say that the basis of an objective experience is subjective. When you are looking at a flower, when you recognize a flower, then perception, knowledge and cognition are taking place within yourself, not outside of yourself. Alexander took ten scholars from Greece to India, and this was the main point which they discussed. Yoga philosophy believes that every experience that you have is an expression of your inner experience. Objective experience cannot be the basis for inner experience. If you want to have inner experience, you have to forget objective experience, for objective experience is an impact on the mind and the senses. If the mind and the senses do not function, objective experience cannot take place. However, there is an inner experience, which is an expression of infinity. It is an expression of cosmic reality. When you have that inner experience within you, you are not experiencing the mind, you are experiencing the cosmos. For thousands of years, people have tried to get that experience. People have tried different methods.

They have tried to get their experience through penance; they have tried to get that experience through celibacy; they have tried to get that experience by herbs and drugs; and they have tried to get that experience through all kinds of ceremonies: burial ground ceremonies, sexual ceremonies, and so forth. Man, by nature, believes that there is an experience beyond the mind, and he also knows that the experience which is beyond the mind is a very powerful experience.

In our times young people undertook an adventure. They experimented on LSD. Why did they do it? To sleep? No. They wanted to go beyond the barriers of the mind and have an experience. They wanted to experience their psyche. They wanted to experience their ego. They wanted to experience their super-ego. They wanted to experience their own Self. They wanted to experience the universe. Even today, millions of people, throughout the world, young and old, take drugs. Even Aldous Huxley has written in his books that he experimented with mescaline and mushrooms. Scholars, thinkers and scientists, throughout the world, have been thinking about the possibility of another area of experience.

The dialectic material scientists say there is nothing that exists beyond the senses, but it has not worked. Even in the Soviet Union there are hundreds of people looking for a psychic experience. They try all the possible methods they can get. People try the drug peyote. They take hashish, they take mescaline, mushrooms, and many more things. In the ancient days, in India, they used to drink what was known as soma. Yoga has a theory about it, that man is part of the universe. You do not exist in the universe apart from the universe. The whole universe is represented exactly, mathematically, and accurately in an atom.

You are the microcosmos. Your mind is the microcosmos. Your thinking is microcosmic, and you

represent the whole macrocosm. If you can know yourself, you can know the universe. Now, how to have that experience? In modern science, there is a theory about it. When you can reduce the speed of time and space, then you can cross the boundary. In the same way, in yoga, you reduce the velocity of the mind. Remember the two words: velocity and frequency. Our minds have velocity and no frequency. We have to reduce the velocity of the mind. After you are able to reduce the velocity of the mind, the frequency of the mind increases and, when you are able to reduce the velocity of the mind, then time and space come closer.

Time and space are the two limiting factors of the mind. You cannot go into the past and you are not able to go into the future because you are conditioned by time and space. Time and space are the categories of mind. This means that your mind functions now and throughout life within the boundaries of time and space, and not beyond. How to transcend time and space? Can you transcend it by hashish? By mescaline? By mushrooms? Conclusions have shown that you cannot.

Meditation

Through the practices of meditation, you can transcend time and space. But meditation is a practice and a discipline. Controlling the mind does not come about just by closing the eyes. Controlling the mind is one of the most difficult things that man can achieve in his life. You can conquer anything, you can do anything in the world, but you cannot control the mind. Controlling the mind is one of the most difficult and Herculean tasks for man, and yoga is a science which teaches that.

What is control of mind? Mind is a force. Mind is energy, and that energy has to be controlled through the practices of concentration. The practices of concentration



help you to bring together the dissipating tendencies of the mind, the multifarious and various thoughts. The hundreds and thousands of thoughts in the mind must be aligned towards one object, therefore you have the techniques of concentration. Through these techniques, you can attain one-pointedness of the mind. When concentration has been achieved, then you go into meditation.

When you practise meditation with absolute regularity every day, then you begin to have the experience of your own Self. There are many techniques of meditation. It is not necessary for me to tell you all of them now. It is very important that one should at least set apart ten minutes, every day, for the practice of meditation. If you can sit down quietly for ten minutes, with regularity every day, then you will start the practice of yoga. To do this, you must accept any one of the yoga techniques. It can be the technique of repeating the mantra. It can be the technique of concentration on a visual object. It can be the technique of pranayama, or it can be concentration on one of your psychic centres. There are many practices.

The important thing in yoga is practice. Practice brings inner experiences. First these experiences belong to the subconscious mind, then they are related to the unconscious mind and, finally, the supra-mental experience takes place. The purpose of yoga is to give you a glimpse of your own Self.

—Discourse at Alexandroupolis, 17 May 1984

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. Please tell us what is the importance of discipline in becoming a sannyasin?

Paramahamsaji: What is the meaning of sannyasa? It does not mean monk, it does not mean a recluse or a mendicant. Sannyasa is an entirely different concept from that which people have understood it to be. I will give you an example. Supposing you have two million drachmas in the bank in your name, the money belongs to you, you can spend it in any way you like. One day, an idea comes into your mind that this money should be used for, let us say, the promotion of music. So you create a trust and put all that money in the trust. It can only be spent for the promotion of music, but previously it was yours, you could spend it any way. That is the concept of sannyasa. When a sannyasin realizes that his body, his mind, his intellect, his resources, are for one particular purpose, then everything is solved. He begins to feel, "This body is not mine and everything I have is not mine", and then he becomes a sannyasin.

Coming to the point of discipline now, there are two forms of discipline: social discipline and spiritual discipline. If a sannyasin lives like a monk and follows only the external discipline without the inner discipline, then he is not a sannyasin, he is a monk. Discipline should be internal and it should be a basic discipline. Sometimes people don't really understand this. They expect that sannyasa means the life of a puritan and they talk about eating, drinking and sleeping in a very peculiar way.

A sannyasin is purely dedicated to his guru and if he continues to follow that, then he can manage and maintain getting up at four o'clock. That is external



discipline which he can follow if he likes; he need not follow if he doesn't like it. I have seen many people who are mentally very disciplined but in their external life they are totally confused. When you are able to discipline the forces of your mind and emotions, that discipline makes you a true sannyasin.

From the very beginning I framed one discipline for myself and that discipline was that I was aware; I tried to maintain perpetual awareness of my guru and my mind. That was my discipline. I did not care for discipline regarding food, I did not even maintain any discipline regarding my behaviour with others, because I always

considered those disciplines external. Initially I even had difficulty getting up in the morning. For over two years, when I was in the ashram at Rishikesh, I could not get up before nine o'clock. All efforts failed; all efforts made by myself or even my guru failed. Then I thought, "It is an external discipline."

Another thing that I came to understand was that discipline has to come through a form of crystallization. If you force disciplines, then you will have a lot of mental problems. What is crystallization? You decide for yourself a minimum discipline and that minimum discipline must be very, very easy. In fact, when you follow that discipline you should have no problem at all. Other forms of discipline you should not even think about, because if you think that you are going to get up at four o'clock and you are not



going to get angry, you are not going to fight, you are not going to steal, you will end up in a mental hospital from too much strain.

Just have one discipline. I will give you an example: "After I take my lunch, I will sit in vajrasana for three minutes." This is a minimum discipline. It is not difficult at all, but in the course of time you will find that you cannot even do this, because the mind is against discipline.

If the mind dislikes anything, it is discipline. Even this three minutes discipline which you have imposed on yourself and which is so easy, a time will come when your mind will not allow you to do it. However, once this minimum discipline is stabilized, then the crystallization takes place. You know what crystallization is? In elementary science you will have learned that crystallization takes place by creating one central point. This is how you make sugar crystals, alum crystals. First you have to create the basic crystal, a very small one in the centre, and then everything comes towards it because that is the nature of the object. That is the nature of chemicals. That is also the nature of the human mind, but many times we try to impose discipline upon ourselves without creating a nucleus.

So, a sannyasin need not worry about discipline, he should only search for a minimum discipline as a nucleus, he should not think of anything else. In a few years you will find that every discipline is automatically happening. Therefore, you can have a minimum discipline for yourself.

Q. How can we overcome jealousy?

Paramahamsaji: People get angry because it is necessary sometimes, people become violent sometimes because it is necessary, but when people become jealous, I don't know what it is for. It does not give you anything.

Sometimes you have to become angry because if you are not angry the other man will beat you up. I have

understood the role of anger, I have understood the role of violence, but I have not understood the role of jealousy and it is so unnecessary that it gives you nothing but restlessness of mind. Your neighbour has a better job, that causes jealousy; or my guru gives him the little tea that he has left in his cup, him, not me! These are very funny things that you encounter throughout life. I have found jealousy to be a universal fact and this causes a lot of unhappiness.

In the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali there is a very meaningful sutra. He says, "When you see a happy man you should make him your friend; when you see an unhappy man, a miserable man, you feel compassion and when you encounter a scoundrel or a man whom you don't like, ignore him." You must develop four qualities towards four types of people. Friendship with a happy person, because many times when your friend becomes happy you become jealous, and sometimes when you see your friend suffering you are very happy, "Mm, he deserves it, now he has to pay." No, you should feel compassion for him, and when you see a person doing a meritorious or virtuous act, you should be glad. Jealousy is the outcome of petty-mindedness.

Q. How can we get rid of lower desires?

Paramahamsaji: Lower desires are not the opposite of higher desires; lower desires are the early form of higher desires. According to the laws of nature, first there is a lower desire. As you evolve, you begin developing higher desires.

What is lower desire? This is a very difficult question because the definition of lower desire is according to your religion and your society. If I want to drink, is it lower desire or higher desire? If I want to have sexual intercourse, is it lower desire or higher desire? It is

lower desire because that is how tradition has defined it. In fact, there is no absolute and ultimate definition of lower desire and there is no absolute definition of higher desire either because society, law and religion merely fix something as standard for the time. What you consider to be higher desire the Soviet Union will consider lower desire and you will be sent to a mental hospital. In the same way, Hindus, Muslims and Communists have their own standards. Therefore, one has to go with the quality of one's nature.

The quality of nature is called dharma. Dharma is not religion. According to your evolution there is a desire which is natural to you. A child desires toys; when he grows up he desires a wife and children. According to your evolution, the nature of your desire has changed, but you cannot say that the desire of a child was bad or unnecessary. Therefore, before deciding what higher and lower desire is, you must first realize what your dharma is.

What is the quality of your nature? Are you a sensualist? Are you hyper-sensual, or are you a pacifist? Are you a greedy man or are you a contented person? According to your evolution you have certain desires. According to dharma you should fulfil them, you should not hate them. You must respect yourself. That is very important for everybody, because many people read books, and then they begin to hate themselves. I get angry, that's my nature. However, in the books it is said it is bad. Everybody says it is bad, but I know it is not. I will try to overcome this, if necessary, as I evolve.

During meditation, during mantra and at other times, many thoughts, lower thoughts as you call them, come into the mind. Let them come. Do not stop them, because you cannot stop them, they will come to you in some form or the other. When a thought arises in the mind you must accept it. If you don't accept it, it will be suppressed, it

will come again. It will keep on coming up for quite some time. Finally it will not come, it will be repressed. Then it will start coming in the form of personality errors and sickness, because lower desires and higher desires are a kind of force, like electricity.

I am always telling people that anything that is coming from the mind is a force. Emotion is energy, passion is energy, lower desire is energy, higher desire is energy. It is like electricity manifesting in the form of light. It can

express itself in the form of heat, in the form of ultra-violet or other rays. Therefore, you should never suffocate your lower desires but you should be careful in enacting them because society will not accept it. Society has its own rules, regulations, considerations and taboos, so you must make a compromise and make friends with your worldly desires also.

I have seen and experienced two types of feelings that we generate in relation to these two types of desires.



When higher desires come into the mind we are so happy and when lower desires come into the mind we feel so miserable. These are the two types of reactions we have towards our own personality. My point of view is that we should not hate lower desires at all. In the course of time they will transform into noble desires because the lower desire is a force which can be channelled towards a constructive project.

It is very difficult for people to make a compromise. I know that even after hearing this, if lower thoughts come into the mind tonight you will be miserable, because you have been told a million times about your thoughts. Statistics show that most of the people who go to mental hospitals are religious people, because religion helps suppression. People with a religious frame of mind have, according to modern psychologists, greater intensity of repression. Religious people have a schizophrenic philosophy: this is lower and this is higher. Then they create a tension between the two, they want to have higher thoughts, yet here come the lower thoughts, so this split personality grows more and more. In the West you find these cases every day. There are so many mental cases because there are such uncompromising definitions. Therefore, if you want to have a normal frame of mind, please drop the line of difference.

You do the same thing with your children too, "Do not do this, do not do this, this is bad, this is terrible!" You have created for your child an impossible ideal which he or she cannot fulfil. That is the reason why children become schizophrenic.

Q. Why is it not important for a sannyasin to do yogic sadhana like asanas, pranayama, etc.?

Paramahamsaji: There are forms of yoga which are intended for householders. A householder keeps himself occupied or

preoccupied with his problems all the time, but when you become a sannyasin you are not occupied at all: no worries, no children, no family, no office, so what happens? You face your mind. Householders do not face it because they are so preoccupied, they have to do so many things: earn money, go to the bank, go to the hospital, purchase medicines, go to the market. They are kept completely busy the whole day and night and therefore they do not face the naked mind. That way they remain extroverted all the time.

A sannyasin does not have any of these preoccupations. He is facing his mind like a person facing a tiger in a room. Therefore, a sannyasin has to preoccupy himself with karma yoga or service of guru. If he occupies himself with meditation he becomes introverted, then he develops a type of psychosis. The balance will be lost.

In the life of a householder there is balance. He is always extroverted the whole day long and when he practises yoga, he introverts himself. This creates a balance between extroversion and introversion. This is so with both a householder and a karma sannyasin, but a sannyasin will not be able to create a balance because his life is such that there is no extroversion at all.

In the Munger ashram I have experimented on both. In the beginning all the people who came to take sannyasa and stay in the ashram would not be given any work. Even now I sometimes do this. These people run away from the ashram very quickly. They do not even live the life of a sannyasin. They put on coat and pants and disappear, because when they do sadhana they face their mind as you face a tiger in a closed room. The swamis to whom I give a lot of work, they stay with me for fourteen or fifteen years because when you work, when you do karma yoga, you do not face the tiger in the closed room.

According to the rules of sannyasa there are four stages: first, twelve years with guru and service; then as a wandering

monk, eight or ten years; third is solitude, seclusion and the practice of sadhana; the fourth stage comes when there is nothing, no rules or regulations, you do as you like. It is then that you can open an ashram or do what you like. Among these four stages, the first is at least twelve years of service or karma yoga or hard work. Sometimes, when you are not well, you can do kunjal and neti and asanas, it's quite all right. However, for your spiritual evolution you must start with karma yoga, then you have to become a mendicant, wandering from place to place, then finally you sit for quiet meditation and samadhi.

Q. How does the guru-disciple relationship express itself and how can the disciple help the guru's mission?

Paramahamsaji: In ordinary human terms it is very difficult to say what would be the form of the relationship between guru and disciple, but everyone, according to his evolution, can manifest some sort of devotion, some sort of relationship, with the guru. Some consider the guru as their father and mother, some consider him as a higher divine being, some consider him as the dearest person, some consider him just as a teacher of higher sciences. I am only giving you these examples, but others can be given.

According to the evolution of the disciple, any type of relationship can be experienced with the guru. However, one thing has to be important in this relationship: whether the relationship is divine or empirical, it has to be able to consume your mind. If your relationship with the guru is not able to scrape duality from your mind, then that relationship is imperfect. You must have seen in the rainy season, when the light burns, the moths go with a driving force towards that light and die there. That has to be the depth and intensity of the relationship. If this kind of relationship

is established between the guru and disciple, then it acts as a great catalyst.

The real guru is within you, he is known as satguru. I can talk about him and you can listen, but you will not know him. The inner guru is far beyond our reach. Intellectually you cannot reach him. Even if you believe in him too much, still you can't reach him, because the inner guru is not a subject of the mind and outer understanding. The external guru acts as a catalyst and explodes the experience of the inner guru. Duality should go. If the duality does not go then the inner guru does not manifest. What is duality? When the perception and the perceiver are seen differently, it's called duality. In duality there is subject and object all the time. In dreams you have duality because you are the seer of the dream. In external life, day-to-day life, there is always duality because you are the experiencer and the world is the experience. When your relationship with the guru becomes very intense, then you forget the duality for some time.

When duality begins to disappear for some time, for a short time there is a sort of imbalance. When you drink a little more alcohol or when you take a drug like marijuana, there is some sort of imbalance. The imbalance which is caused by the intense relationship between you and your guru is different, but it can be felt by every true disciple.

This imbalance which a true disciple experiences is a philosophic imbalance or sometimes it is an imbalance concerning your relationship with other people, or with the objects in your daily life. Sometimes you have a little problem with your family, sometimes you have a little problem with your previous beliefs, sometimes you have a problem with your attachments, but this is temporary. If you can patiently wait, then this imbalance will be settled.

Many times this causes great concern in the life of the disciple, because you have one mind. When you give your whole mind to your guru then you have difficulty relating to others. If you give a little of your mind to your guru, a little to your job, a little to your friends and a little to the people you love, then there is a lot of dissipation. In ordinary life we can maintain this balance. You love your children, you love your husband, you give love to your wife, you relate with your friends and to your business and professional work, but this balance is sometimes lost on account of the intensity of the relationship between guru and disciple.

The disciple has nothing to do for his guru. He has to accomplish only one thing: to perfect his love and devotion to his guru. In this connection whatever he does for the guru becomes an act of devotion. It is like this: when the mother is cooking lunch or dinner for her child, it is also an act of love for her child. In the same way, when the disciple is working for his guru in any form, that is also an act of devotion or bhakti.

You have selfish actions and selfless actions. In the world, all your actions are self-orientated, but the actions for the guru are not self-orientated, they are devotion-orientated or dedication-orientated. When you work for your family and your friends, there is an object, there is an aim, there is an idea behind it, but working for the guru is karma yoga. In fact, this is also a delicate subject because many times disciples become missionaries and then the real purpose is lost. The purpose is the dedication of your emotion.

Q. The guru is aware of the disciple and is guiding him. However, is he conscious of the physical level?

Paramahansaji: This question can be answered in many different ways. Sometimes the guru leads his disciple

physically, many times he can guide the disciple without any physical contact and the guru is aware of the disciple even before the disciple comes to him.

There are four kinds of disciples and they approach the guru according to their type. Therefore, the guru has four levels of awareness. Sometimes, when people are in distress they approach a guru and become a disciple in order to get out of distress. Sometimes people wish for something in their life and they approach a guru for spiritual help. The third type of person goes to the guru with a desire for knowledge, they want to know many things about creation, about the universe, reality, the Self, etc. The fourth type is the one who goes to the guru for nothing; he likes to go to him, that's all, and this is the type of disciple about whom the guru knows before the physical meeting.

About the first three categories of disciple: who approach in distress, with some motive or desire, or for knowledge, the guru is usually not aware. Sometimes you can be a combination, you can be in distress and you approach a guru and at the same time you have very high devotion for him. The combination of the first and the last grade can make the guru aware of you before you see him.

Whichever type of disciple one is, if one has the fourth quality then one is already known to the guru before the first physical meeting. However, this fourth quality cannot be cultivated, it has to be in the nature. It has to be spontaneous and natural, because you cannot enact love and devotion. Love and devotion are expressions of man's inner purity. Your relationships with the people in the world are expressions of inner desires. Your external relationships with the people belong to the range of avidya and your relationship with the guru belongs to the range of vidya.

—Satsang at Satyanandashram, Kypseli, 20 May 1984

Yoga: Our Priceless Tool

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Yoga is such a vast subject that it is not possible to introduce the whole thing in one speech. It has, in fact, startled the scientific community throughout the world. In the East and the West, hundreds and thousands of medical men and scientists are working on the effects of yoga on the human body, mind and society. Even countries like the Soviet Union, which have been slow to accept different perspectives, have also acclaimed the scientific aspects of yoga.

I have visited countries of the Eastern European bloc, such as Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, where doctors and scientists have expressed a very great interest in yoga. On 3rd April this year, a yoga teacher was sent into orbit, to experiment on the effects of yoga on astronauts. When astronauts are out in space, they face many physical, mental and emotional difficulties. The scientists were working on various possibilities for helping them. Finally, they came to yoga for the answer. Many yoga teachers were trained before this space flight and, finally, one was selected to go into the space for experiments. It is not my intention to tell you what astronauts face in space, but these problems can only be tackled through yoga. It is the scientists who have come to this conclusion. From this, you can now figure out whether yoga is a sect, a religion, or a science. If it was a religion or a sect, the Soviet Union would be the last to accept it.

There are many other aspects of yoga, but this evening I am going to deal with two. I will not be talking on the



third aspect of yoga, because it will take more time. The first aspect of yoga is yoga in hospitals; the second aspect is yoga in schools; and the third aspect is yoga in one's own life. Regarding yoga in one's own life, I shall wait for some other opportunity to talk to you. But the first two aspects are very important for the present-day world.

Yoga in hospitals

I have recently been to a very important hospital in Paris, and listened to the discussions with Europe's leading cardiologist: Doctor Kolarac. I have frequently visited his hospital. In fact, we have been working on patients suffering from hypertension and other heart diseases. It

has been accepted that today almost eighty-nine percent of diseases originate from stress. This stress is responsible for our unhappiness and unhealthy conditions. First of all, we try to overcome this stress with drugs. But now we have come to a conclusion that through the practices of yoga, stress can be completely overcome. Stress has always been with humanity, but today it is really acute.

Stress is caused through many situations. These situations later turn into mental, psychological, emotional, and physical problems. They have found that yoga exercises, yoga breathing and also yoga relaxation, help a lot. These yoga exercises are not like physical exercises. There are eighty-four yoga postures and each and every one of them has a direct effect on the hormones, the nervous system and endocrine secretions. In fact, research centres have revealed that through the practice of these asanas or postures, the energy flow in the body becomes very efficient. All of these eighty-four asanas need not be practised. But, for each and every problem, for each and every disease, for each and every sickness, one or two, or a group of yoga postures, should be implemented.

Doctors have found these yoga exercises very useful in treating many diseases. Throughout the United Kingdom, they teach yoga postures to patients suffering from multiple sclerosis. Multiple sclerosis is a very widespread disease in Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom. Thousands of boys and girls stay in a wheelchair throughout their lives. I have trained hundreds of yoga teachers in England, who work through the government system, to teach yoga lessons to multiple sclerosis patients. These lessons also include the practice of yogic breathing, which is considered to be very important, as it influences both the brain and the nervous system.

It is important for you to understand whether these yoga postures do have an effect on the body or not. There

are various yoga research programs going on in America, in Europe, in India, in Japan, and in Australia. They are working on the effect of each and every posture of yoga on the human body, and they have come to conclusions on which particular group of exercises is good for diabetes, rheumatism, or arthritis. It is not possible for me to deal with all the diseases at this meeting.

You may be surprised, or you may not even believe that doctors are now working on the possibility of the effect of yoga on cancer. Dr Ainslie Meares, who is a leading psychiatrist in Australia, and Dr Simon Tang, a doctor in America, have already worked on yoga and cancer. What they have found is very interesting and optimistic as the modern medical science has not yet found the answer to cancer.

In practical terms, cancer means a death warrant. If someone is told he has cancer, it means he knows he has to die very soon. However, yogic relaxation, yogic breathing or pranayama, and concentration of mind or dhyana yoga all have a direct effect on the cancer cells through the white blood cells. Therefore, throughout the world, hundreds of yoga teachers are engaged in teaching yoga for the treatment of diseases. In India, there is a vast institution at the place I come from, where people come in thousands to learn yoga from every part of the world. It is a most modern research institute of the kind which even you do not have in your country. There we work with hundreds of people on the effects of yoga on each and every cell in the nervous system.

Yoga in schools

Can you believe that children of five and six years derive benefits from yoga? Or do you think yoga is only for religious people, or for the aged? Yoga was first introduced into schools in France. In a secondary school, a yoga

experiment was started on children. After six months of practice, these children were examined by psychologists and also by scientists. The results were so startling that the education department of the French government has now decided to include yoga as a part of their broader development curriculum for children. The improvement in the children's performance was astounding.

Every family has problem children and we often do not know how to deal with them. Perhaps the only way we deal with them is to coax them or tell them what not to do, or to frighten them. Through yoga, a proper balance is created in the physical body to rectify the disharmony. In Switzerland, yoga was introduced in a school for children with special needs. Within one year, these children showed absolute growth and change.

Creating balance

Some of the many aspects of yoga are hatha yoga, including pranayama, and raja yoga. Hatha yoga is mainly concerned with the reality of the physical body. It deals with the problems of the physical body very scientifically. First, through yoga postures and secondly through the breathing exercises of pranayama. Nadi shodhana pranayama is the practice in yoga in which you breathe through one nostril, retain the breath for some time, and then exhale the breath through the other nostril. When you breathe through one nostril, changes take place immediately in the corresponding brain hemisphere.

The brain has two hemispheres, the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere. It has been found by research scholars that the right hemisphere of the brain is connected to the left nostril and the left hemisphere of the brain is connected to the right nostril. So, when you breathe through the left nostril, you are actually activating the right side of the brain, and when you are breathing

through the right nostril, you are activating the left side of the brain. Activity in the brain is very important as far as the physical body is concerned. Diseases like polio, muscular atrophy, multiple sclerosis and respiratory diseases are caused by imbalance in an area of the brain. Not only physical diseases but one's emotional character is also influenced by the brain. Sometimes we are depressed, sometimes we are angry, and sometimes we are really unhappy. These are all manifestations of what we call an imbalanced state in the brain.

A very important aspect of yoga is raja yoga. Raja yoga is the practice in which concentration and meditation of mind is taught. The mind is capable, but it is dissipated, just as the rays of sun are dissipated. If you are able to concentrate the rays with a magnifying glass, then it can create fire. In the same way, if you can concentrate the tendencies of the mind, you can create energy inside the mind. This is a very important aspect of yoga. Utilizing the energies of the mind develops one's mental power or willpower. By regular and daily practice of concentration, you can create a unified energy of the mind. Everyone has some special and creative energy within themselves. Nobody is useless. Everybody can be a creative person. Everybody can be successful. Everybody can do something in life. However, you need a mind which is concentrated.

Concentration and meditation

In yoga, the art of concentration of the mind is dealt with in great detail, because concentration brings out energies that are latent and hidden in you. All through the twenty-four hours of each day your mind is wandering. If you try to concentrate your mind on one idea, you may not be able to do it. Sit down for ten minutes every day, and focus your mind on one point, and forget everything for some time. Just one idea, one thought, one object in your

mind, and not two. Initially, you will find it very difficult. Later, you will find that you succeed. When you are able to concentrate your mind, then you can release immense willpower. You may get a beautiful idea regarding painting, or you may discover a piece of music, or you may discover some new idea, but how to practise meditation? If you study the science of raja yoga you will come across many ways of concentration. Now I will just give you one practice and, if you practise this for ten minutes every day, you will find not only relaxation and peace of mind, but immense strength within you for your daily life.

The first important thing in meditation is to keep the spine upright and straight. The second thing is you have to sit in a cross-legged position. You may like to meditate sitting on a chair, but that makes the blood circulation go downward towards your feet, therefore it is not considered to be the right position. When you are sitting for meditation and concentration, the centre of gravity should be the bottom of the spine, not the feet. The bottom of the spine has a very important centre of energy and it is directly connected with the higher centre in the brain. So, you must first of all learn how to sit cross-legged. The third point is that you have to keep your eyes closed. When you keep your eyes closed, then fix your mind at some point inside, either at the tip of the nose, or in the middle of the eyebrow centre, or in the centre of the heart, or in the navel. The fourth point is to concentrate on the incoming and outgoing natural breath. You have been breathing all the time, but now you have to concentrate that you are breathing in and out. First concentrate that the breath is going through the nostrils, in and out. After a few days or weeks, you feel the breath between the navel and the throat, up and down. After a few weeks, you concentrate on the breath, but in the spine, going up and down.

So, the first step is the practise through the nostrils; the second step is to concentrate the practice between the navel and throat; and the third step is the practice in the spine. Concentrate for ten minutes, which means 150 breaths in and out. After that, concentrate either at the mid-eyebrow centre, or in the centre of the heart, or the centre in the navel. This is one practice in concentration. There are other ways of concentration as well. You can concentrate on a light, you can concentrate on a point, and you can concentrate on the psychic centres in the body. These psychic centres are situated in the spinal cord. There are six of them. One psychic centre is situated at the top of the spine. Another psychic centre is situated at the bottom of the spine. If you concentrate on these psychic centres, you will immediately get one-pointedness.

A very important thing for concentration is a sound. Sound means mantra. Sound means a word, and this sound or mantra should be practised with the breath all the time. When you are breathing in and when you are breathing out, or when you are concentrating on a particular point, you produce the sound inside your mind. By repeated practice, the sound becomes powerful. When it becomes powerful, it gives you psychic visions or mental pictures. These mental pictures are very important for working out the problems of your mind. When you concentrate, you begin to see mental pictures. These mental pictures are known as psychic visions, and they relate to your inner mind, or the problems of the mind. These are the two forms of yoga, which are necessary for day-to-day life.

Who am I?

There is another form of yoga, and that is the real yoga, "Who am I?" Of course, all of you may not be thinking this. You may be interested in, "What is all this? What is a flower, and what is a tree, and what is this, and what is that?" We



are concerned with the objects outside. But sometimes, you become a philosopher. You want an answer to “Who am I?” Or “What am I?” So many questions come to you. You can never get a response to these questions through the intellect. You have to adopt a spiritual practice, an inner practice to get the answer. That is precisely what Socrates said, “Know thyself.” “Know thyself” means “Who am I?” When he said, “Know thyself”, he did not mean, know the object. He meant that you are not what you think you are. You are not the body. If you were the body, then Socrates would not have said, “Know thyself”, because you know the body. You are not the mind. You are not the senses of the body. You are not even the prana or life force. You are not the rational intellect. You are not the ego. If you are not these, who are you? Therefore, that wise man of this country, many thousands of years ago said, “Know thyself.”

This Self is the ultimate essence. This Self is the ultimate and the absolute essence of our existence. It is an experience, not a thought, nor an idea. It is an experience, which you get only after jumping out of the mind. Through constant practice of yoga, you achieve this. It is not easy to forget the body. It is not easy to forget the mind. Then how to transcend them and how to know the Self? It is precisely for this that the yoga system was designed. Yoga is definitely helpful in diseases, yoga is definitely good for you and your children, but there is a greater problem before every man: he does not know himself. We are almost living a life in hypnosis and sometimes when we become philosophical, we begin to question. It is for this purpose that you have to learn more about yoga, and practise it for some time in your daily life.

A message of hope

Before I close, I want to talk a little bit about myself. I am a traveller. Each year I travel throughout the world. I am not a member of any institution or organization. I have millions of disciples, from every religion and from every country, including East European countries. I came to Kalamata eight years ago. Here I gave my first speech in Greece and started a yoga movement. Now yoga has spread all over mainland Greece and the islands. I can only tell you that you will have to discover more and more about yoga for a fulfilling life. It is not only for yourself, but also for your friends that you will have to discover yoga. There are many people throughout the world who are unhappy. There are millions of people throughout the world who are experiencing pain and suffering, and they are trying to get out of their suffering and pain. To such people, yoga is a message of great hope.

—Discourse at Kalamata, 2 July 1984

Yoga: Our Precious Heritage

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Swami Sivamurti: Some thousands of years ago, there lived in Sparta a great man, quite a mythological and legendary figure. You probably know more about him than I do. His name was Lycurgus. Lycurgus was famous for many things, but one thing stands out in particular that he was famous for around the world. He introduced a way of speaking and listening to the people that he ruled. He believed that if the people could learn how to listen, they would also learn how and when to speak. When I was studying about Lycurgus, Swami Satyananda, my guru, came to mind. Like Lycurgus, every word he uses has a special meaning and is in just the right place. I have pleasure in introducing you to him: *Swami Satyananda Saraswati*.

Swami Satyananda: Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to address you this evening. It has been my desire for a long time to visit Sparta, because I had heard a lot about it when I was studying Greek history. In fact, a phrase which impressed me very much in life is ‘Spartan health’. It does not mean the health which you get through medicines or through food. By Spartan health is meant the health which you get through yoga. I have visited Greece many times, and have thought about visiting Sparta and today, I have the opportunity to be here in this historical and illustrious town.

I am a traveller. I travel throughout the year and throughout the world. I have visited every country in the world, not once, but many times. Wherever I go, I stay

for a day or two and talk about yoga. In fact, even if I do not want to talk about yoga, people want me to talk about it, in every country. People are trying to experience something beyond this external world, and they believe that within the mind and within the brain they can have many visions and experiences. These experiences, they believe, give you peace of mind and knowledge. They call these experiences 'mind exploding experiences'. You can call them spiritual experiences. Some people call them psychic, or divine, or super-mental experiences.

Doors of inner perception

Some time ago in America, they tried to have these experiences through drugs. A great many thinkers tried drugs. Not one drug, but many. Many books were written on the 'doors of inner perception', which means 'doors through which you can look inside and see things'. Even now, throughout the world, young and old people, from every religion and nationality, have tried to get these experiences through drugs. However, they found that there is a superior, greater and more powerful method which is known as yoga.

The method of yoga was perfected by the yogis in India for many thousands of years. When Alexander the Great went to India, he left with an Indian guru called Kalanos, with whom he lived in Babylon. Yogis in India have practised these methods, for many thousands of years, in order to experience inner perception. Wherever I go during my travels, I find everyone asks me one thing, "How to meditate?" There are millions of people in the world who are practising meditation today. They sit every day, at the appointed time, just for ten minutes. You may sleep for ten hours, but you won't get relaxation. In ten minutes of meditation, you feel as if you have rested for two or three days.

Today, meditation is being practised by many, from ordinary people to large business tycoons. During meditation, you concentrate your mind on one point, and during ten minutes of meditation you are able to communicate with your cosmic energy. Within everyone, inside their own being is cosmic or universal energy. Just as matter has energy within it, in the same way, you have cosmic energy within you. You may not know it, that is another matter. It is there not only within old or wise people, but everyone, without exception, has that cosmic energy within them. You have to connect yourself with that cosmic energy. When you are able to connect yourself with the cosmic energy, then you begin to have experiences. Now I will tell you just a few things about meditation which will be useful for you in your daily life.

Meditation and the kundalini shakti

You must understand one thing: that meditation is linking yourself with the cosmic energy. Wherever I go, in every part of the world, people want to know how to meditate. Is meditation a psychological practice? Has meditation something to do with the awakening of energy in you? Now, you should listen carefully. Yogis say that at the base of the spine there is one shakti or energy called the kundalini shakti. It is known by different names. Some call it primordial energy, some call it evolutionary energy, others call it supra-mental energy, and yogis call it kundalini shakti. It is dormant at the base of the spine, but it can be awakened through the practices of meditation.

When you stop your mind, for ten minutes, then you begin to feel the awakening of the energy from the base of the spine, through the spine, and towards the brain. The spine is not just an aggregate of bones. The spine is considered very important in yoga. There are many yoga postures which are taught in order to improve the

spine. When you meditate, the spine must be upright and straight. Within the spine there are very subtle and fine channels of energy which are connected with the higher centres in the brain. Within the spine itself there are six chakras or psychic centres, and they are very important in so far as your performance is concerned. If you can open one centre, then you become a great poet, or a singer, or an artist, or a creator. There are many great rishis throughout the world, many great painters and many great artists. These people have one of those centres open, released and clean. Therefore, the practice of meditation should be done on each chakra.

Three meditation techniques

There are three basic techniques of meditation. First, you can meditate by concentrating on a sound; second, you can meditate by concentrating on your own breath; and third, you can concentrate by practising on a form or mandala.

If you want to meditate by concentrating on the breath, then you concentrate on your own breathing. When you breathe in and when you breathe out, you should hear the sound Ham-So. With the expiration, Ham, and with the inspiration, So. Tonight, you can try this for a short time.

Just sit down quietly, and close your eyes for five minutes. Concentrate on the breath that is going in and going out. Maintain the awareness, "I am breathing in, I am breathing out." After some time, you will feel with the in-going breath the sound So; and with the outgoing breath the sound Ham. Maintain a careful concentration on the flow of So-Ham, So-Ham or Ham-So, Ham-So. Do this practice for just ten minutes. After ten minutes concentrate in the middle of the eyebrow centre, on a tiny little star, like a star that you see in the night sky. When you are able to concentrate on that tiny little star in the

middle of the eyebrow centre, you will find that there is a sensation taking place at the bottom of the spine. Sometimes you feel a slight warmth, or you feel that there is some sort of awakening occurring, and sometimes you can see a lotus flower. These are the three experiences which you can have when you start the practices of meditation. You will like meditation, but do not overdo it. Ten minutes is more than enough.

Yoga and space

Do you know that, on 3rd April, a yoga teacher was sent into space by the Soviet scientists? When the shuttle went into orbit, a teacher of yoga was sent into space for seven days. This yogi was from India. He was included in order to teach yoga to the astronauts. When astronauts go up into space they get space sickness. They also suffer from weightlessness. As a result, they have nausea, they lose their appetite, they sleep badly and have bad dreams, and so on. The scientists experimented first on the ground. They tried to discover what was the effect of yoga practices on astronauts. What they found was very positive. So, a yogi was sent into space where he taught yoga to astronauts for seven days. During this time, I was in Australia, and watched the reports on this experiment on the television. Maybe, in twenty years time, if there is a shuttle from Athens or Sparta to the moon and, if you happen to go on it, you will have to practise yoga first. This is what will happen. There will be shuttles in twenty years, and I will also go but I will have no problems, nor will I suffer, because I practise yoga. But you will have problems, you will have nausea and all kinds of problems, if you don't also practise yoga.

Now, what did the yogi teach the astronauts? He taught them three things. One, yoga postures. There are eighty-four yoga postures, but it is not necessary to practise all

of them. Two, breathing. Three, one-pointed meditation. From now on, all the astronauts, who go into space from the Soviet Union or America, will be taught yoga first.

Finally, let me tell you, I come from India. And India and Greece were in a very close relationship many thousands of years ago, especially in the province I come from. There were many Greek girls who got married there to Indian boys. Maybe I have a little Greek blood, and you have a little Indian blood! I am not joking. You can study your own history.

From India, I go to every part of the world including China, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Iran, and Turkey, everywhere. I have disciples, yoga schools and yoga students everywhere. And I am really happy to see all of you here, and please practise meditation for ten minutes every night. Now, if you have any questions to ask, you may do so, and I will answer you.

Questions and Answers

Q. It is very difficult at first for a beginner to practise the lotus posture, or to stop the mind for ten minutes. How can we manage this?

Paramahamsaji: You do not have to practise the lotus posture. You can sit in this easy posture which I am sitting in. If it is difficult, you can put a pillow under your buttocks. The important thing is that the spine has to be upright and straight.

I know stopping the mind is very difficult. But you have to channel the mind first and in order to channel the mind, you need to find the easiest and the best methods. In yoga, there are many techniques which are much

more powerful than others. I have just indicated only one technique: the So-Ham practice. There is another technique which is more powerful: you breathe in through the left nostril, stop the breath, breathe out through the right, and then the other way. And then do the same with the ratio of 1:2:2. When you breathe in, inhale for the count of one to eight, then retain the breath for one to sixteen, and then breathe out for sixteen. The mind will definitely be channelized as a result.

Q. Is there a best time to meditate, or can you meditate at any time?

Paramahamsaji: The best time for meditation is when the stomach is empty. After breakfast, after lunch, after dinner, or after supper, is not the right time. The most ideal time for meditation is in the morning during sunrise, when the cosmic energy is rising. Between five in the morning until seven is the best time, in my opinion.

Q. During which part of the day should we practise sirshasana and for how long?

Paramahamsaji: Practise sirshasana five hours after eating. There are two very important conditions for sirshasana. One: an empty stomach, and two: empty bowels. The person who regularly practises sirshasana should ensure that he does not suffer from constipation. In winter you can practise it in the afternoon, but in summer, it is better to practise sirshasana in the morning while it is cool. I think it is important to practise it for three minutes. Of course you can also practise it for ten minutes. It is better to practise a little but practise regularly.

Q. Can we do it more than once a day?

Paramahamsaji: Yes, in the colder months, you can do it twice a day, but in summer, it is advisable to practise

it only once. Greece is very hot like India, so the rules that are applied in India should be applied here. During winter we practise sirshasana twice a day and during summer when the temperature is around 33 degrees, we just practise once. In countries like Denmark, Sweden and Norway, they can practise twice a day every day throughout the year.

Q. Paramahamsaji, the Japanese have a word 'hara' they concentrate on, that they refer to as a centre of gravity. I'd like to ask what is the connection with the chakras?

Paramahamsaji: Hara in the Japanese tradition is manipura in the yogic tradition. In hatha yoga, this is considered to be the most important centre. They say that prana goes upwards, and apana goes downwards. A yogi should try to reverse the process, so that prana goes towards the navel, apana goes towards the navel, and at the navel, both energies unite. That is yoga. When these two forces unite at manipura chakra, or the chakra of hara, in the region of the navel, then there is an awakening. Manipura chakra is also known as the solar plexus, and is the chakra of the solar energy. The awakening of the energy from manipura chakra is the awakening of the primordial power in the Japanese tradition. In order to awaken this shakti, there are two important practices in hatha yoga known as uddiyana bandha and nauli kriya, the contraction of the abdomen for some time, and then churning of the abdomen.

In the tantra tradition, there is another practice known as vipareeta karani mudra. In this practice, the awakening of energy also has to take place from the navel centre upwards. So, in the yogic tradition, we accept both possibilities and should try to practise both. In fact, in the Japanese tradition, all the martial arts were considered to be linked by absolute concentration. If total concentration



is achieved then your accomplishments are much better and much greater.

Q. If possible, could we have a simple definition or description of the term 'cosmic energy'?

Paramahansa ji: Cosmic energy has two forms: macrocosmic and microcosmic. Macrocosmic is the universe outside, such as the planets, the solar system and space. Microcosmic energy is within the individual being and is the size of a bindu or a point. Just as energy is reduced to an atom, and that atom is divided and subdivided, there is a point where that atom is energy no more. In the same way, if you concentrate on a particular point, after some time the point goes away and, in place of that point, there is a vision or experience. You can have that experience only when the mind is withdrawn. As long as you have this mind, you cannot have the experience. However, with some practice, when you withdraw the mind, you will have the experience.

This experience can be had in many stages. When a little mind is withdrawn, that is number one; when the whole mind is withdrawn, that is number two; and when the ego is withdrawn, that is number three. When the ego is withdrawn, you have absolute experience and this absolute experience is that universal energy. However, in the tantric system, they have tried to explain the form of this universal energy in a geometrical fashion, through angles, etc. They say that the triangles in yantras are the symbols of the universal energy. In tantric texts this has been discussed many times. What is universal energy? Is it a form, a particle, a vibration, or is it quanta? Tantra says sound is one form of universal energy; yantra is a second form of universal energy; and mandala is a third form of universal energy. These are the three forms of universal energy, according to tantric texts. However, it

is a very abstract subject and just a few minutes is not enough time to discuss it.

Q. If we practise yoga, for just a little bit every day, can we awaken the kundalini?

Paramahansa ji: Of course, there is no doubt about it. But everybody has a different time. Some people have already evolved, and some are evolving. Those who are evolved will have a quicker experience and those who are evolving will take a little more time. If the person who is instructing you knows exactly the point of your evolution, then he can teach you the correct method. I think common sense is the safety device for an individual. Once that's turned off, you are open to outside powers, whether they are negative or positive.

In many countries, including America and Japan, a lot of research has been done on this particular point. What is the effect and result of yoga and meditation on the body and the brain? Where are the waves in the brain when you switch off the mind? They found these practices are very good for the heart and many other problems. Therefore, one should learn these practices from someone who has experience.

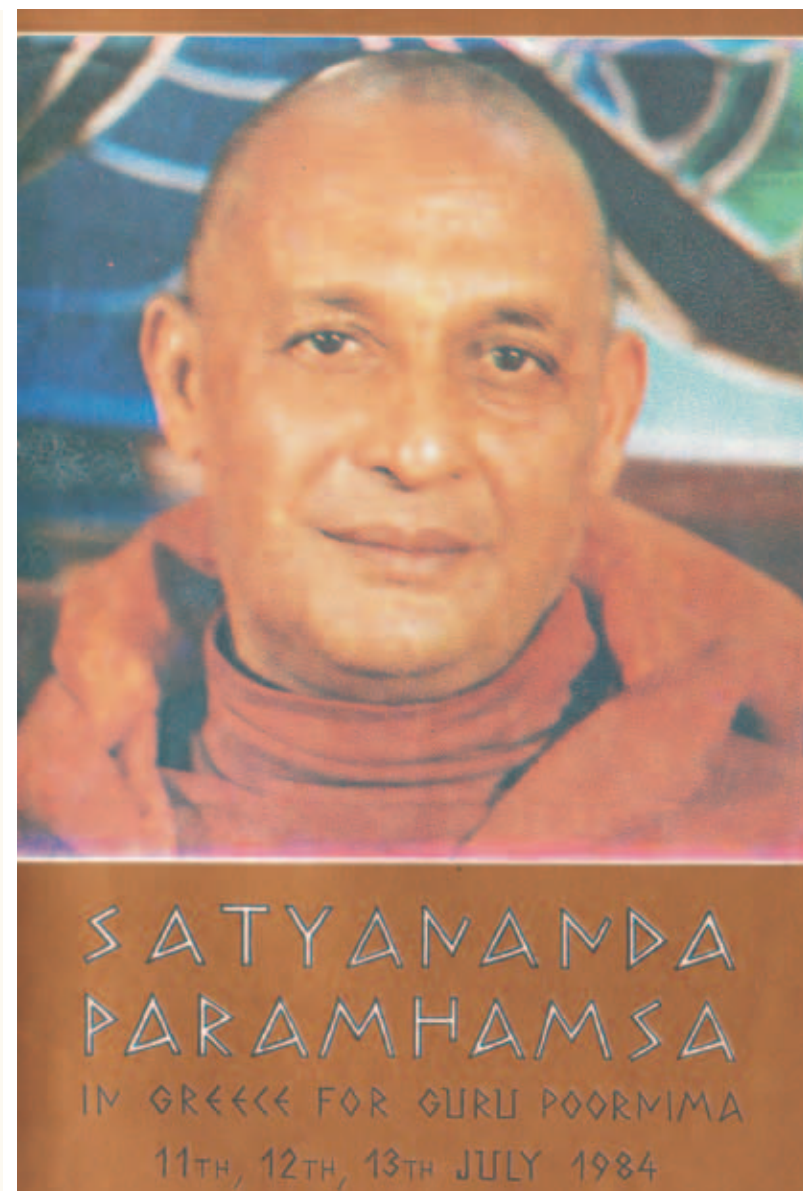
Modern psychology has thrown some light on meditation. When you stop your mind for some time, your repressions come up first and they are sometimes unpleasant. However, the overall result is very good, positive and beneficial. In fact, nowadays, there are many therapies in which meditation is being practised. The repressions come out first, and you shout, cry, jump around, or fall down. It is rather like purging the stomach in the toilet. At first, it is unpleasant, but the final result is very positive. Thank you very much for your intelligent questions.

—Discourse and satsang at Apollo Hotel,
Sparta, 3 July 1984

The mind does not rest when you sleep; the mind does not rest when you take tranquilizing pills; the mind does not rest when you go to the beach or the discotheque; the mind does not rest when you drink; or when you smoke hashish. The mind does not rest by any other method except meditation. In meditation, the mind undergoes a state of hibernation and, during this period of hibernation, the mental energy is conserved one hundred percent. The western approach to mind is like a motor car or a tape recorder that is switched on and left running the whole day and night. It ultimately goes flat.



Covering letter for Guru Poornima celebrations 1984



Brochure for Guru Poornima celebrations with Swami Satyananda 1984, Hotel Nepheli, Panorama, Thessaloniki

The Eve of Guru Poornima: Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. What is the difference between emotion and devotion and what is the role of kirtan in devotion?

Paramahansaaji: When you offer your heart to the things of the world it is called emotion. When you offer your heart to the higher reality which is immortal and eternal it is called devotion. When you give your heart to the fleeting things in life, then it undergoes different experiences. Sometimes it is joyful and sometimes it is depressed, because the nature of the things of the world is not eternal. The nature of the world is ever-changing. However, when you give your heart to higher things, there is a stability.

Kirtan is the best way of practising bhakti or devotion. Music is a form of yoga. Sound is the soul of music. Sound has many levels. The ultimate level of sound is called nada which means vibration. Another level of sound is called 'the Word'. So, when you sing kirtan you are actually practising nada yoga or the yoga of vibration. Every sound has its own distinct form, and these forms can be evolved by the practice of kirtan.

When you practise kirtan, it automatically gives you concentration of mind. Concentration is very difficult to achieve. The mind deceives us. However, just like a snake charmer plays his flute and puts the serpent into hypnotic sleep, so does music. In this age, when the mind is full of tensions and anxieties, kirtan is the easiest path. Kirtan should be sung with a group and then it elevates the mind. This is the path of nada yoga and this is the path of bhakti yoga.

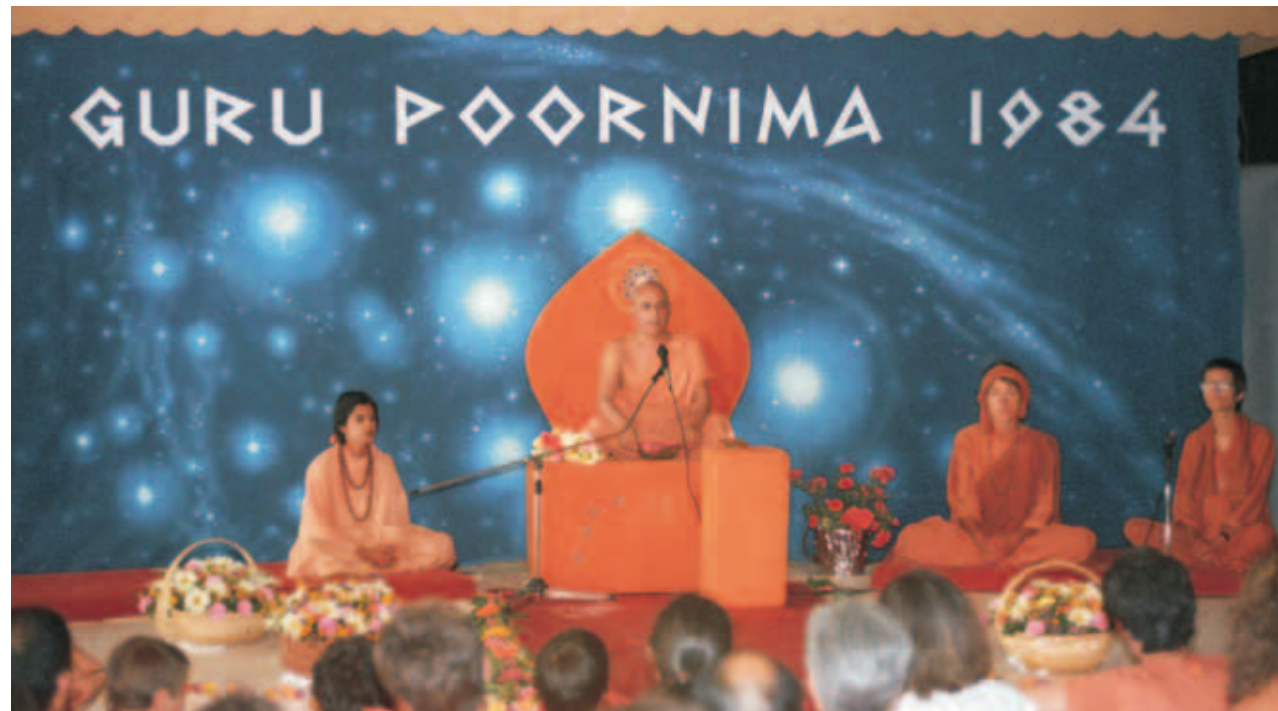
Q. What is aggression?

Paramahansaaji: Aggression is born of rajas guna. Each individual nature has three qualities or attributes. These three attributes are known as sattwa guna, rajas guna, and tamas guna. Sattwa is harmony, rajas is aggression, and tamas is inertia. Some people have inertia predominant in their nature, some have aggression predominant in their nature, and a few people have harmony and balance in their nature. Everyone in this creation is a combination of these three qualities. Someone is predominantly inert, or aggressive, or harmonious.

Aggressive people have strong desires in them. They have strong passions, ambitions, and work hard. They are very dynamic. However, these qualities create a lot

of tension and mental problems. You should not try to suppress aggression. Everyone must try to go through the experience. By controlling the mind, you can channel your aggressive tendencies for creative work, therefore the importance of karma yoga in this respect.

Karma yoga is the way through which you can channel your aggressive tendencies for creative work. When aggressive people have no work, they become mentally abnormal, and that is why in the prosperous countries, like America, or maybe even in Europe, there are more people with mental illnesses. When these people have no employment, they get money from the government. All day they sit in the bar, or smoke hashish, and they do no karma, action. They get easy money and they become





mentally imbalanced. In affluent countries like America and Europe, there are more mental cases than in the developing countries. In India, we have to work very hard. We can't depend on the government. We have to earn our daily bread. If we can't earn it, we starve. We can't have the luxury of drinks and dances.

I also think that charity makes a nation useless, whether it is charity from me, you, or the government. Social security is charity from the state. Many religious institutions give charity. During an emergency, when there is a famine, flood, or an earthquake, it is okay. But if you don't have a job, and I give you five hundred dollars every month, tell me, sincerely, what do you do? You drink, you smoke, and you chase women! Is that the way a poor man should behave? A person who cannot earn has no right to enjoy these unnecessary luxuries. When you are sattvic, it's okay. You have no employment, and the state gives you some money which you spend on your family and children. This is all right. But rajasic and tamasic people misuse it.

Tamasic people feel that the money they get from the government or from charity, is perfectly all right. All day they listen to music and watch television, or they visit their friends, or their boyfriend or girlfriend. That is what is happening in the West. Therefore, those people who are aggressive by nature have to do hard work. They should not accept charity. Only animals need charity, because an animal cannot go out and work. A horse does not live on charity because it works for you. A dog does not live on charity because it guards your house. A cat does not live on charity because it kills rats. Birds do not live on charity because they clean the atmosphere. Donkeys do not live on charity either. A hopeless man lives on charity, and he still thinks he is the master of creation! We are not the masters of creation; we are the slaves of creation.

In India, I have always told people not to live on charity, but work hard and earn your own bread. I don't need your compassion. I don't depend on anyone. From dawn to dusk, I must work. I must think and I must work. This is the way to balance the aggressive nature or rajas guna. If, some day, my country becomes very rich and it gives free money to all its citizens, so they have to just go to the post office to get money, then I am sure my country will die. It will completely disintegrate, like the Egyptian civilization or like the Romans. The secret of survival is hard work. The secret of survival is independent thinking. The secret of survival is to kick charity. For the last one hundred and fifty years in India, Christian missionaries have come, and they have given us clothes, bread and money. Rajasic people exploited this charity and became lazy. As a result,

today the whole nation is suffering. Therefore, do not kill your aggressive nature, but at the same time, supplement an aggressive nature with aggressive work. Until your last breath, you must work because work develops the soul.

In the western countries today, many people work for two or three hours a day and get a little money. Then they stop working because they think that work is only for money. If I work for four hours and can get enough money for the day, why should I work more? This is not the right philosophy for a yogi. It is anti-yogic philosophy, "I have enough money, so no work is necessary." Work is not for money. It is for the growth of your soul. However, when you have achieved predominantly sattwa guna, which is an harmonious nature, then work is not necessary. A yoga aspirant, who has achieved the sattwic state, can

renounce work. He can devote all his time to meditation and contemplation. But only if he has become sattwic.

A sattwic person has no strong desires or passions, nor fervent temptations or ambitions. He has no strong disturbances of the mind. He is always happy within himself. His worries and anxieties are just a few. Such a person does not need work. To such a person, you can give charity. He will not misuse it. But the aggressive, dynamic and rajasic people must be compelled to work. Tamasic people, the inert people, must be made to work. If you don't do it, then addictions like heroin, cocaine, glue-sniffing, or marijuana may arise. Perhaps even more dangerous things will occur, because these things are available for lazy people. Sattwic people do not need these things. When I'm happy, why should I need marijuana? When I'm tranquil, happy, or satisfied, why should I take heroin? You can read in the newspapers every day about the comings and goings of drug trafficking, and still the government cannot control it. People want drugs because they are sick. The whole nation is sick. Millions of people are sick. What will sick people do? They have no other way. They do not know about yoga, they only know about cocaine. If they know there is a better way, where you can get a little more happiness, then they will want to take it.

Q. How can one develop discrimination?

Paramahansa ji: A child, when he is one year or one-and-a-half years old, cannot discriminate between a snake and a rope. When he becomes five, six or seven, he will never go near a snake, and he will be able to discriminate between a snake and a rope. As you contemplate, think and reflect, your awareness grows, and when your awareness grows, then discrimination comes by itself. Then there is discrimination between the real and the unreal, between the mortal and immortal, between right



and wrong. This quality is a consequence of the higher mind. When you live in association of wise people, you develop discrimination. When you study the lives of great people and saints, you develop discrimination. It is necessary that you should try to evaluate the things of the world every now and then.

Q. What is the difference between perception and cognition?

Paramahamsaji: Perception occurs through the indriyas or the senses. You perceive form through the eyes. Cognition is the quality of the mind. Perception eventually changes into cognition. First, through the medium of the senses, perception takes place. You perceive a form or a sound through the eyes or ears. These perceptions are recorded by the mind. Finally, this becomes cognition.

Suppose a bird is singing, you hear it and thus perceive it. This perception is then transformed or converted into cognition. The next time you hear a bird singing, the bird is either the same bird, or a different one. You perceive the sound and cognition takes place, and you consider whether this is the sound of the first bird, or of another bird. You meet me at an airport, you see me, and cognition takes place. Next time you meet me at another place. You perceive me, then the knowledge takes place through cognition that I am the same man that you saw before. So, cognition and perception are interrelated processes within you.

There are five senses of perception and five senses of action. Both are integrated with cognition. The senses of perception are ears, eyes, nose, tongue and skin. The senses of action are the vocal cords, hands, feet, genital organ and anus. I am moving my hands, this is an action, and this is controlled by the five senses of action. You are listening to me, that is perception, but if you understand me, that is cognition, because

you have previous knowledge of what I'm talking about. If you have no previous knowledge of what I'm talking about, then there will be no cognition. For cognition, it is necessary that you should have an experience before. You can recognize me only if you have seen me before. Therefore, there is a relationship between perception and continued cognition. There is no single motion in perception, and there is no single motion in cognition. There is a series of perceptions and a series of cognitions.

The five senses of action are the karmendriyas, and the five senses of perception are the jnanendriyas. The impulse of action and the impulse of perception are both sent to the mind at the same time and then cognition takes place. Supposing your bladder is heavy, then the message is sent to the brain. Cognition takes place, "I must urinate." Then the message is sent back to the organ and I urinate. This is called action. Action feeds cognition; cognition controls action.

This is also the same principle with spiritual experiences. The external world is a consequence of inner cognition. But the cognition within you is also based on the quality of the perception outside, therefore the whole of life is a combination of the flow of perception and cognition. If you can stop the flow of perception and if you can stop the flow of cognition, then samadhi or self-realization will take place. Perception and cognition can take place on an external plane, as they are taking place now. Perception and cognition can also take place in the lower stages of meditation and in the lower stages of samadhi.

Lower samadhi in raja yoga is known as savikalpa samadhi. Vikalpa means perception and cognition. Even in deep meditation there is a continuous flow of perceptions and cognition going on at the deeper plane, therefore in raja yoga the lower stages of samadhi are divided into four grades. The first is inner logic, the second is inner thinking, the third is a blissful feeling, and the fourth is the realization of my Self. They are known as savitarka



samadhi, nirvitarka samadhi, ananda samadhi and asmita samadhi. They are names of the four stages of lower samadhi. They indicate the quality of perception and cognition taking place on different levels of the mind. This continuous flow of perception and cognition is known in yoga as vikalpa.

In raja yoga two technical words, sankalpa and vikalpa, are used. When there is a flow of perception and cognition on the external plane, it is sankalpa. You see chocolate in a shop and you want to have it; you experience this desire and again you want to have it. Perception and cognition is now involved. The whole process is called sankalpa. However, when you go deep into meditation, then the mind changes its quality. The mind becomes very fine. Its frequencies are changed. The vibrations of the mind are on a different dimension. Many times you don't know what is happening outside, but perception and cognition are still taking place within. What happens in dreams? You are perceiving and cognizing. There is no man there, but you see him. There is no elephant, but you see it. There is no train or plane, but you see them. Perception is taking place without the presence of the object. Object is the basis of perception, but cognition is also the basis of perception. In a dream your perception is based on the cognition which you are having at the time. This is called vikalpa. In samadhi, you will have to go beyond sankalpa and vikalpa. So, perception and cognition are the two feathers of thought. We separate them for the sake of explanation, but they are so intertwined with each other that they cannot really be separated.

The ancient Greek thinkers have spoken a lot about this. However, there was a problem with the Greek philosophers, whether it was Plato, Aristotle, or whoever. They could not link perception and cognition with the higher state of mind, therefore at one point they stopped. Where they stopped,

Indian philosophy started. Indian philosophy really starts at that point where perception and cognition come to an end and inner experience takes place.

When Alexander the Great was in India, there were a lot of letters exchanged between him and Aristotle because when Alexander came to India, he came one hundred per cent Greek. Of course, he was an invader, but he was a Greek thinker, and he came to conquer India. However, the Indian gurus conquered Alexander, and Aristotle came to know about it and was startled. He wrote many letters to Alexander about this, because he did not agree with the way Alexander had started thinking after being in India.

All the dialogues of Plato and all the dialogues of Aristotle are based on a level which is not beyond the mind. Perceptions and cognition are qualities of the mind. In India they say experience is beyond the mind. They call it anubhuti, which is an experience born from the higher consciousness. When you have transcended the body idea, when you have transcended the mind idea, when you have transcended the idea of name, form and me, when time has stopped in the brain, at that time, there is a luminous experience. That is called Experience with a capital E. You can call it Self-experience. You can call it transcendental experience. Alexander was convinced of this and by the time he was returning to Greece, there was a great difference between Aristotle and Alexander. In the beginning this difference was only classical but, as I understand, it became very petty. It is believed that Alexander died along the way, but that may not be true.

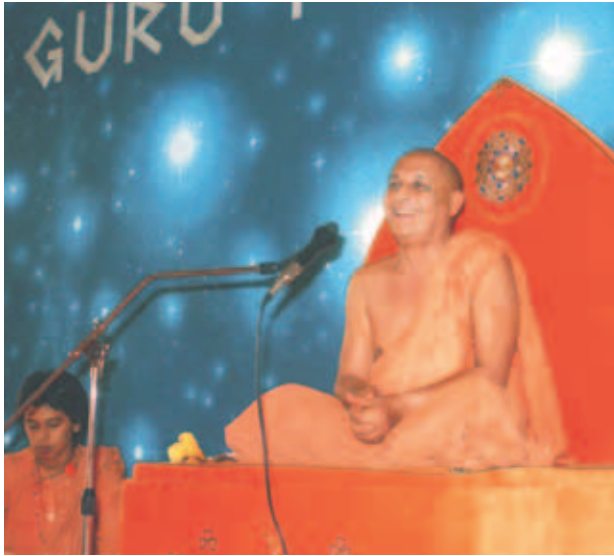
Q. I would like you to talk about states which are beyond the mind.

Paramahansaji: The question is very good, but the time is not appropriate. For this, we will have to have another



seminar. This cannot be answered in a few minutes. Philosophers, more than two or three thousand years ago, spoke about it in your country. In India, people have been discussing this problem for the last five thousand years. Therefore, when we want to discuss this, we will have to discuss it from both points of view, as in the archives of history there are only two philosophies, there is no third philosophy: Greek philosophy and Indian philosophy. There is no western philosophy; western philosophy is a consequence of Greek philosophy.

Greek and Indian thinkers have spoken a lot about the states beyond the mind. But apart from thinkers, there have been yogis. Yogis have experienced it; philosophers can explain it. Greek philosophy has explained it to an extent. Indian philosophy has also explained it to an extent. But at one point, Indian philosophy says, "I can't go any further." They use the words, "Neti neti" (no more, no more). Beyond the neti neti, is the experience of a yogi. Beyond the philosophy, is the experience of a person who has transcended the body and mind. So we will have another seminar for this, and you will be



surprised to know that, after India, this is the first time in the West that I have spoken a little about perception and cognition, because people don't want to understand this except the Greek people. You have to understand about the mind and its behaviour if you want to understand yoga. The practices of yoga deal with the various stages, tendencies, consequences, manifestations and behaviours of the mind.

The satsang is over. Tomorrow morning, between seven and nine we will meet in the ashram. If I were in India, then people would come to me on Guru Poornima day at that time. Do you know what for? Not to see the ashram. Not even to see me. I am here, you can see me now. But in order to offer something of you to me. The offering is symbolic and a token. It represents your personality or your relationship with me, and you should offer me the most beautiful and the most tender thing. That is one offering. Then you have to offer the most crude and the grossest thing. You know what is the most

tender and the most beautiful thing in the world? Either a flower or the heart. They are the most tender and most beautiful things in the world. If you can, you give them to me. Of course, you don't have to take your heart out of your body to give it to me! A flower represents the heart. And what is the crudest and grossest thing? The mind and money.

—Satsang at Nepheli Hotel, Thessaloniki, 11 July 1984

Guru Poornima Discourse

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Parallels between Greece and India

The relationship between Greece and India was strong in the past. These relations were on different levels. They had diplomatic, cultural, philosophical and spiritual relationships. India and Greece exchanged their ambassadors, and many gurus, swamis and yogis were brought to Greece from India. The contribution of both of these countries to each other has not been made known to the modern Indian or Greek people. Even this type of unstitched dress, which I wear, was worn by ancient Greeks, except when they were on the warfield.

Ashoka, the great emperor of India, was the grandson of a Greek lady. In India, Ashoka is considered to be the greatest, most compassionate and benevolent emperor. When Alexander the Great came to India, he was greatly impressed by the philosophy and culture of the country. He met ten great wise men in India and had philosophical and spiritual discussions with them. When he returned from India, he brought with him a great yogi, whose name

in Greek literature is known as Kalanos, and in India we know him as Kalyana. Kalanos or Kalyana was a great saint who belonged to the sect of Jains in India.

In India we have many systems of philosophy, and each system defines, in its own way, the nature of the universe, the nature of man, and the nature of ultimate reality. These questions come to everyone, and we really don't find an answer. What is the universe? What is the relationship between man and the universe? Is there only the manifested universe, or is there something which is unmanifested? In India, these philosophical questions are answered differently by different wise men at different times.

There is one Indian philosophy which says that man is matter, but can evolve himself into a superman. In order to develop this matter into a superman, he has to do certain practices. This philosophy is known as the Jain philosophy. The Jain philosophy impressed Alexander very much because the background of Greek philosophy is that matter is real. Ancient thinkers like Democritus and others said time and again that matter is final and indivisible. What you can see exists, and what you can't see does not exist. This was the background of Greek philosophical thinking. Out of the various schools of Indian philosophy, this particular philosophy impressed Alexander and the Greek free thinkers.

Socrates

At that time, and long before that, a great philosophical revolution was taking place in Greece. The ancient Greeks were philosophically polytheistic, they believed in many Gods, exactly as the Hindus did. Ancient Greek religion and Hindu religion both went the same polytheistic way. If you study Greek and Hindu mythologies, you will find a striking similarity. By the time Socrates was born, they had started thinking philosophically.



Socrates said, “Know thyself.” This meant that the gods and goddesses, who the people were searching for in heaven or elsewhere, were not at all necessary. It was more important, Socrates thought, that one knew one’s own Self. Greek people at that time couldn’t really understand what Socrates was talking about. They thought that he was mad. They thought that he was an atheist or a cynic. I am sure you know what happened to Socrates.

Socrates had two points. The first point was that if you want to understand reality, then you have to know your Self. There is no use running after various gods and goddesses, such as the goddesses of the sun, learning, light, death, birth, and so on. It is not necessary if you want to know reality. That was his first point. Socrates’ second

point was very classical and scientific. He told the Greeks, “You say that matter is indivisible and ultimate, but there is something beyond matter.” When he said ‘Self’, he meant something beyond matter. At that time Socrates was misunderstood, but today what science is proving is exactly what Socrates said. Matter can be divided, the atom is not indivisible, and beyond matter there is energy. This was the philosophical tradition which continued in Greece.

The Upanishads

The same process took place in India. However, India has a tradition. It does not destroy the old at the cost of the new. If polytheism was not valid, the belief in different gods and goddesses was not valid, in India one didn’t destroy

them. Hindu thinkers also said, “Know thyself”, and this philosophy is found in the Upanishads. The Upanishads in India are a fantastic literature on the nature of reality. They are a collection of dialogues between a guru and a disciple. The disciple is asking the guru certain questions about the spirit, the universe, man, the mind and life. The guru is giving the disciple the correct reply. These questions and answers are collected in India in the form of the Upanishads.

In Greece also, great yogis were born. But Greece had problems for centuries. Every great civilization has its own drawbacks. Whether it is the Egyptian civilization, or the Roman civilization, or the Greek civilization, or the Hindu civilization, they have their own problems and drawbacks. These great civilizations suffered in the past, and two of them were completely destroyed. However, in India, there was a great tradition which is alive even today. This was the tradition of swamis, sannyasins and gurus. These people dedicated their life to the search of the ultimate truth. This search was not only intellectual, it was real and intimate with their own lives. They developed a system by which even an ordinary person could gradually experience the truth. Like the Egyptians, the Romans and the Greeks, India also experienced turmoil, storms and destruction. Empires changed, religions changed, and social structures changed in India too. But the gurus and the swamis inspired their disciples, again and again, to follow the path of spiritual experience.

Yoga and space travel

This year, on 3rd April, a yoga experiment was conducted in space. A Russian space satellite went into orbit and there was a yoga teacher in it. I was in Australia at the time and many people asked me, “Why should a yoga teacher go into space?” Of course, most Australians have a very deep

understanding about yoga, but not everyone. Someone asked, "What has happened to the Russian leaders? Have they become religious?" This person thought that if you believe in yoga, you believe in a religion. I then had to explain why the yoga teacher was sent into space.

In this space age, yoga has become very relevant. While yoga can help one find his own Self, it can also help him overcome some of the problems encountered when you travel in space. There are many challenges. It is like an illness born of many factors. One factor is weightlessness, which causes many puzzles. One doesn't feel hungry, feels nauseous, sleeps badly and has frightening dreams. These are some of the problems which astronauts face when they are in space. They try to suppress these difficulties with

the help of modern drugs. However, through simple yogic practices all these symptoms can be completely overcome.

When we meditate, we experience weightlessness. When we experience the awakening of kundalini in mooladhara, we experience depression, nausea, sleeplessness and nightmares. So, a yogi is used to the difficulties that an astronaut is experiencing in space. That is why today research is investigating the effects of yoga on the astronaut. Science will need the help of yoga. Science has not been able to answer the cure of cancer. It will not be able to eliminate the causes of cancer, but yoga can do it. Much research is already being done in America, Australia, and other countries. If you read my books, then you will know what these experiments are,



and where they are going to take place, or where they have taken place.

There is another important area where yoga can help modern science. Imagine that a spaceship is going from here to far off Jupiter or somewhere beyond, and it will take about ten years. Four astronauts are up there for ten years in space and they will go mad. What can yoga do? Yoga has a trick and it is called samadhi, or hibernation in scientific language. Practise pranayama and kumbhaka. Stop the mind and lie down. After nine and a half years you open your eyes, and you are nearing Jupiter, Venus, or Mars!

Samadhi

Scientists will need to be trained. You can live for many years by stopping the mind as well as the prana. Within you there is the mind, prana and consciousness. Many yogis have given demonstrations to scientists. Previously they thought it was only a hoax or a trick, but now it can be proved. One yogi, a few years ago, went into samadhi while inside an underground cave for ten days. He was a householder. He had a wife and two children. Therefore, when I say 'yogi' I don't mean a celibate. He who practises yoga is a yogi. If you are a celibate and you practise yoga, you are a yogi. This underground cave was a very big cement box. There was no oxygen inside. Many doctors



from England and other countries came to test the situation with their modern equipment. What they saw was that the man inside the cement box was dead. The cardiogram showed there was no heart beat or pulse, so he was dead. They call it 'clinical death'. However, after ten days the yogi emerged from the cave and is alive even today. So, if you can die for ten days and then live, you can die for ten years and live.

Samadhi is the ultimate aim of yoga. If you are a religious person, you can worship God through yoga. If you are not religious, you can attain samadhi. Supposing a person does not believe in God, can he attain samadhi or not? Yoga says yes. What happens in samadhi? All the faculties of the body,

mind, and prana cease functioning. Why should you do it? The answer is simple. Why do you switch off your tape recorder? You could keep it on. By midnight the battery will be flat, and when the battery is flat, it dies. If you conserve the life force, the mental force and the physical force, then you save your battery. It is not possible for householders, or for people who are actively engaged in life to practise samadhi for ten years. However, it is possible for everyone to practise samadhi for half an hour each day.

How can you attain samadhi? What is the way? Samadhi cannot be attained in one day. Samadhi is reached gradually through the practices of yoga, and precisely for this we practise hatha yoga.

Guru Poornima

Today is known as Guru Poornima. Poornima means full moon. The full moon represents illumination. Guru means 'the dispeller of darkness'. When the full moon is in the sky, there is light everywhere, and that light is very soothing and comfortable. This seminar should develop in us that experience. We will have satsang, and you will ask your questions and I will answer them, and the swamis will give you classes in asana, pranayama, antar mouna, yoga nidra and ajapa japa.

—Discourse at Nepheli Hotel, Thessaloniki, 12 July 198



Samadhi is the ultimate aim of yoga. If you are a religious person, you can worship God through yoga. If you are not religious, you can attain samadhi. Supposing a person does not believe in God, can he attain samadhi or not? Yoga says, "Yes"

Guru Poornima Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. What does karma sannyasa initiation imply and how does it differ from full sannyasa?

Paramahamsaji: The life of man is divided into four stages. These four stages are known as ashrama. The first stage is when you are very young and studying. The second stage is when you are a householder fulfilling the desires of your life. The third stage is when you have, more or less, fulfilled your desires and are now searching for a higher meaning in life. The fourth stage is when you have no desires and you are only living to serve others and to experience your Self.

The first stage is known as brahmacharya ashrama; the second stage is known as grihastha ashrama or the ashrama of the householder; the third stage is known as karma sannyasa ashrama; and the fourth stage is known as sannyasa ashrama. Karma sannyasa is intended for those householders who are searching for a higher life. As they have a family, obligations and other responsibilities, they are not able to undertake full sannyasa. While you live with your family and with your responsibilities, you should try to understand the deeper meaning of life. You can love your children, you can do your job, you can meet your friends, you can deal with money, business and property, but you must keep yourself free from identification and attachment.

It is true that in the beginning you have attachment to your people, and you also expect many things from them. When your expectations are fulfilled you are very happy, but when your expectations are not fulfilled, you are really

unhappy. Your happiness and unhappiness depend upon your relationship with circumstances in life. Your happiness and your unhappiness depends upon the quality of the fruits of life, and that is why you are not able to experience joy throughout. Every little thing hurts you or every little event makes you happy. That is why you are always experiencing what we call swings in life. A karma sannyasin must realize this fact. Everybody wants happiness. Nobody wants to be unhappy. You can see this not only in human beings, but even in animals. When it is sunny outside, you will find your dog is basking in the sun. When it begins to freeze he comes into the room near the fireplace.

Why do you want to marry? Because you think that it will bring happiness. Why do you want money, children, family and friends? Because you believe they will give you happiness. But do you get it? No, you do not get it. If you maintain a diary for one year, and note down the moments of happiness and unhappiness, at the end of the year you will find there is more unhappiness and less happiness. Does this mean that the things of the world give you unhappiness? The cause of unhappiness is inherent in your philosophy. The cause of unhappiness is inherent in the philosophy of your relationships. So, when you are working to discover a better philosophy of relationships in



your life, then you are ready for karma sannyasa. Neither husband nor wife, neither children nor money, nothing, gives you either happiness or unhappiness. If you are unhappy, dissatisfied, miserable, then this is only due to you, because this is your way of thinking. Therefore, instead of making changes in life, you make a change in your mind. That is karma sannyasa. In karma sannyasa you do not renounce anything. You do not renounce your children, you do not renounce your husband or wife, and you do not renounce your job. But you should renounce your philosophy of attachment.

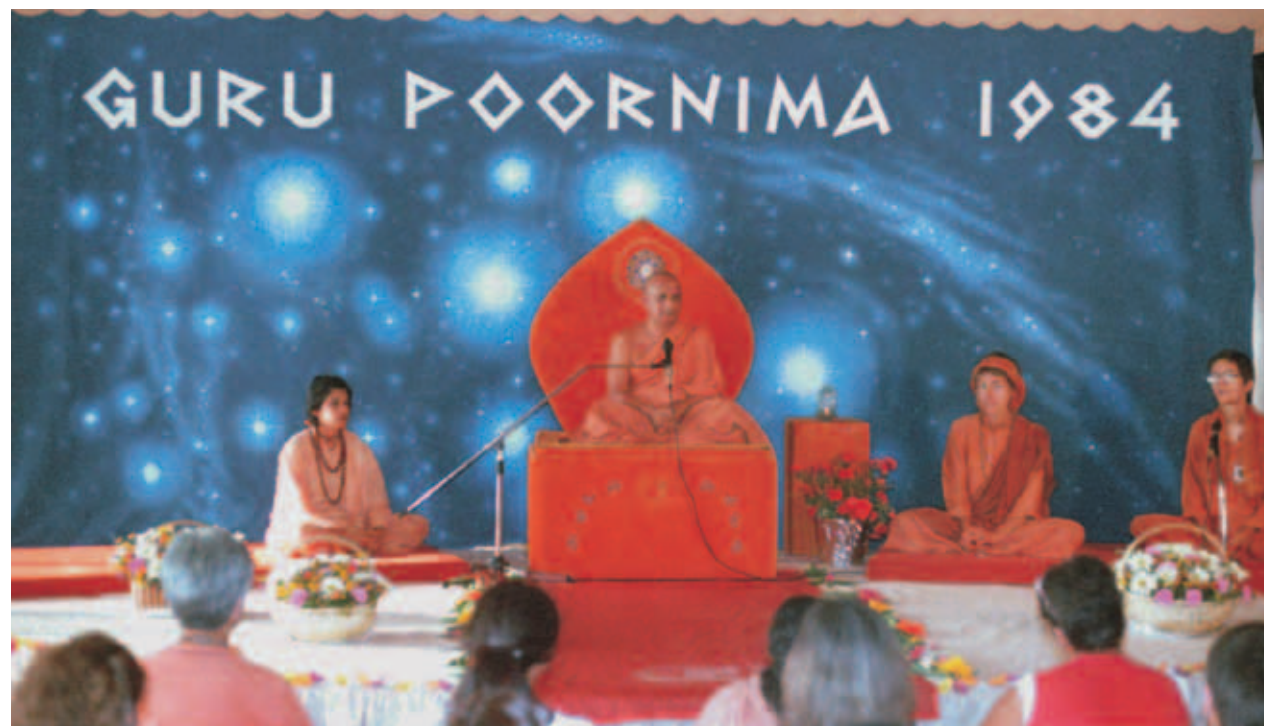
What is attachment? This is a very funny philosophy, as it is very difficult to explain what attachment is. It is a relationship which you have imagined. It is a relationship in which your ego or the 'I' is involved. There was a man who was working as a teller in a bank. One morning he learnt that the bank had been robbed. He still went to the bank as usual, he lived a normal life, he didn't speak about the robbery at the bank, and he slept very well. After a few weeks, when he was returning from the bank, somebody pick-pocketed his money. It was not much money, just five hundred drachmas. This incident put him out of gear. He came back home completely disturbed. He fought with his wife, he abused his children, he did not eat well, he did not sleep well. This is a simple example of attachment and non-attachment. Why did he consider that five hundred drachmas his own? Because he had involved his ego. The money in the bank did not belong to him. That was not his personal loss. The five hundred drachmas was his personal loss.

For a karma sannyasin it is very important to understand that you have a relationship with everyone. It is possible to love without attachment, and it is possible to live without attachment. In the Bhagavad Gita, there is a beautiful example: how does a karma sannyasin live

in life? He lives like a lotus leaf in water. A lotus is born in water, it lives in water. Without water there is no lotus. But if you take the leaf out of the water, it is always dry. It lives in water, but the water does not taint it. A karma sannyasin has to live in this world of reality as the lotus leaf lives in the water.

In order to experience the higher Self, there are two ways. One is the path of karma, and the other is the path of sannyasa. You can have a higher experience through sannyasa, and you can have the same experience through involving yourself in this world. Your relationship with the external world is called karma, and your relationship with your Self is called sannyasa. These two parts are not different. They can be integrated and combined. So,

when a householder is trying to live like a sannyasin, he is a karma sannyasin. The initiation does not involve any promise. Spiritual life is voluntary. It is not a compulsion. If you do not want it, it does not matter. You are not obliged to become a sannyasin. You are not obliged to practise detachment. Everything you want is absolutely voluntary. It does not involve any promise. It is not a kind of commitment. It is an understanding. It is a relationship between yourself and your guru because the guru is the central point for a karma sannyasin, for he can give you proper guidance. Therefore, karma sannyasa is a simple acceptance of a greater philosophy in your life. At the time of sannyasa, we permit a karma sannyasin to wear this geru colour during their sadhana, or when they are in the



ashram, or when they are at a seminar like this, but not in all places, because the guru colour represents the inner dynamic life. This colour represents the integration of external and internal life. Therefore, this is the symbol of karma sannyasa and of full sannyasa. However, those who want full sannyasa, have to live a different life altogether.

Q. Is ashram life and living in the ashram important in one's spiritual development?

Paramahansaaji: Ashram life is always considered important for spiritual growth. In earlier times, people used to go and live in the ashram for a few days to change the philosophy of their life. An ashram is a place where you work physically as well as spiritually. The ashram culture is a very ancient culture, but survives only as a living culture in India. Even in India, the ashram culture received a setback during the last two or three hundred years. During this period, the swamis in India faced a lot of difficulties and problems. Still, the Indian people have a great faith in ashrams. Rich or poor, they support ashrams financially and in every possible way.

The concept of the ashram in India is very different from that in the West, particularly in America. In western countries there are many communities, and they all have bad habits. They take drugs. In the name of tantra, they practise anything. Therefore, the growth of ashrams in the West is not satisfactory. After India, the only country which has the largest number of ashrams and really great and well-organized ashrams is Australia. There are many hundreds of swamis and sannyasins who are working and running these ashrams. The people in Australia are very devoted and dedicated to yoga. It is a very peaceful country and also a very prosperous country. They have a lot of money, a lot of land, and lots and lots of everything. You may not believe this, but in Australia, yoga is taught

in prisons, hospitals, schools and clubs. I have many sannyasins in Australia who are prisoners in jail. Some of them are serving life sentences. I give them sannyasa by letter, and then I send another swami into the prison to teach yoga. Whenever we have seminars in Australia, the prison authorities let them out on parole.

It is very important for every culture to have a base, and the base has to be very strong and philosophical. Technology cannot be the base of a culture. Armies cannot be the base of a culture. Why was Egypt destroyed? Why was Rome destroyed? What happened to Babylon? What happened to the Sumerians? And what happened to the great Greek people? A base has to be there. India suffered military invasions for over two thousand years. Cruel invaders came and killed people. The yogis were tortured and the women were raped. However, Indians believe that a spiritual culture is the base or foundation of everything. When the roots are stable, even if you cut the tree it will grow again. You have to protect the root. Many people protect the tree and do not care about the root. Ashram culture is the root culture of all peoples, and this should be encouraged in every country. We are also trying to develop a good ashram in Greece. So far, we have succeeded in a modest way and, with the goodwill of everybody, we hope that we will have an ashram which will be able to cater to the needs of many people.

Q. Could you speak to us about your guru, Swami Sivananda, and the life you had with him?

Paramahansaaji: It is very difficult to speak about the person whom you like and love. For me, Swami Sivananda was not only my guru, but he was also my guide and philosopher. I read many times about Christ, but I have not met anybody who can live that life. But Swami Sivananda lived that life. He was the epitome of compassion and

mercy. He never criticized or hated anybody. He was full of love and understanding. In my opinion, he was a saint of the highest order. In his ashram, many hundreds of people used to come and visit him every day, and they used to receive his blessings even without asking. Hundreds of sick people and hundreds of unhappy people used to go to him, and would feel better. Yet he never showed any sign of ego. Whatever difficulties people came to him with, he would just tell them to live a good life. That was all.

It was not necessary for us to go to him and ask. We used to remain in our room, or at our work, and we would receive inspiration from him. The relationship between guru and disciple is not an intellectual relationship. The disciple has to only think, and the guru receives the thought and inspires him, and the disciple receives the inspiration. There is no external communication and it is not necessary. We are used to asking through speaking. If you want something, you have to speak, but it is a really gross way of communication. A disciple must think and by strong thinking, his frequency increases in quality, and then the guru's inspiration flows to him.

Swami Sivananda always lived in his room and did not come out. In the morning he came out for one hour, in the evening he came out for another hour. At those times, the visitors used to offer their respects to him. He spoke very little. He was not a talker. His reply would be 'yes' or 'no'. The more you speak, the less is the effect. It diminishes your mental faculties. Therefore, we used to receive instructions from him through the mental plane. I was very close to him, and an important person in the ashram, and had few occasions to be with him or in front of him, and that was one of the things I liked. Remain in your room and close the door. What is the use of walking around like a vagabond? Many swamis like to see archaeological places, beautiful places, natural places, or libraries, but I

think everything is in you. Close your room and close your eyes. Gradually, you can see everything within you. You can see your disciple and you can see your guru.

The inner life is more real than the outer life, but you cannot experience this inner life as long as you are involved with the outer life. Many people want that I should talk to them. I do, but I don't think that is the right way. You sit in your room and I sit in my room, and we talk. That should be our relationship. That is what I told you yesterday. Our relationship is not physical; it is spiritual. For that we do not need to come closer to each other. You are in your room, I am in my room; you live in Greece, I live in India, or you are in America or Spain. You close your eyes. That is fine. Increase your frequency and then you will know that it is possible to have this deeper communication. Geographical distances are not distances. This is the faculty which all disciples must cultivate. But we like the body. We think it is tangible. If you are able to talk to your guru in your room, you are not satisfied because he is not in the body. Even if you dream about him the whole night, he doesn't satisfy you, because you live in a gross world, with a gross mind and a gross body.

Swami Sivananda left his body one day, but for me it made no difference. For me, death does not make a difference, because death is only the dissolution of the body. The atma does not die. The body is not immortal. You can live one hundred years, maybe two hundred years, or maybe three hundred years, but not forever. In fact, when he died I felt it was good. Why should all the people live? The old house must be demolished; new houses should be built. All the old clothes must be thrown out and new clothes must be worn. Even as you discard your old robes, so the soul also discards its old robe. The different bodies are like robes. Within this body there is the soul. It is the light, the knowledge and the experience.

My guru died physically, but he is alive. I can contact him anytime. He can contact me anytime. For you, it may sound very strange, but the guru is an eternal reality.

In 1964, one year after his physical death, he contacted me and ordered me to teach yoga. I was surprised, because yoga is not my philosophy. For twelve years I studied Vedanta philosophy. Vedanta philosophy is full of Indian philosophy and I am an expert in Vedanta. Yoga I just studied here and there, like you, and he ordered me to teach yoga! So then I studied it, and I learnt everything very fast. In 1969, I was a bit disillusioned about ashrams. I was also disillusioned about disciples, just as you are sometimes disillusioned about a husband or a wife. He contacted me again and said, "No. Go on with the ashrams. And don't stop making disciples." In this way, he contacted me many times. Therefore, I am telling you that the disciple and the guru are the two poles of one energy, and you should try to develop your inner awareness and so be able to have a spiritual relationship with your guru. I am over sixty-two. Many people who I knew very well, are no more. Some of my closest people have died. But I have never been sorry, because I don't miss them. I don't miss them because I don't believe that my relationship with them was through the body. My relationship with the people I love is through the spirit. So, even if their body is destroyed, it does not matter. The spirit is there. I can contact them, therefore death for me is not as serious as it is for others.

Q. How can one overcome love and attachment for this physical body?

Paramahansaaji: It is not necessary to overcome your attachment to the physical body. The body has a karma. The mind is controlled by the law of karma. You must experience attachment with the body. That is why



this human body has been given to us. Attachment is a necessary education for spiritual growth. Attachment, love and passion are important for our growth. You must experience them and go through those experiences, and then you will have a different experience. People try to fight against attachment. They try to withdraw themselves. That causes problems in their lives. You are a householder. You may have a wife or a husband, and children. You may have a business or a job. You may have your boyfriend or girlfriend. What for? You must experience it. Go through that experience. Respect this experience. That is the way of transcending it.

—Satsang at Nepheli Hotel, Thessaloniki, 12 July 1984

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. How many types of guru are there?

Paramahamsaji: In the traditions of yoga and tantra, a guru is very important. Besides yoga and tantra, there are other traditions which explain guru in various ways. Some think that a guru is a teacher; others that a guru is a guide, and some think that a guru is just like a philosopher. In this way, various traditions have tried to explain what

a guru is. Literally, guru means ‘dispeller of darkness’. This darkness is the spiritual darkness which envelops everybody. Therefore, there are different types of gurus to meet the different understandings of aspirants.

In tantra and in yoga, a guru means one who is able to inspire the deeper experience. The mother is the first guru, because she inspires your spirit. The relationship between the mother and the child is also the relationship between a guru and disciple. It is another matter if mothers do not understand this role. Right from the time of conception, for many years she trains the emotions, the mind, the intellect and the beliefs of the child.



The second guru comes in your life when you receive a mantra initiation from him. As this guru gives you a mantra, he develops your inner consciousness.

The third guru presides over your wedding ceremony. Marriage is a very important spiritual function of life. It is not for pleasure that you marry, but in order to have the deeper experiences in life. Therefore, the person who presides over the wedding ceremony is also a guru. He should inspire you and make you understand what marriage is, how it should be conducted, and how you should utilize it for your spiritual progress. What is the place of passion in spiritual progress? Do passions lead you to hell? Or do they help you to grow spiritually? That the guru has to explain. Do the relationships in marital life lead you to hell, or do they help you to grow spiritually?

Then comes the guru who initiates you into the practices of yoga. You may not be able to get such a guru because enlightened gurus are rare. They are people who are not born every day like chickens and pigs. Only rarely are they born, and that generation is fortunate that lives with him.

Finally, there is another important relationship between the guru and disciple. When the disciple has finished his commitments in life, when he does not have strong desires and when his mind becomes comparatively peaceful, then there is a union between the guru and disciple. Such disciples are known as swamis and they live as an integral part of their guru. They dedicate and consecrate their body, mind and spirit completely to guru. They become the channels of the guru’s inspiration. In Christian teachings they say, “Empty thyself.” A disciple who has emptied himself is a swami.

When you make the right hole in a piece of bamboo, it becomes a flute. If there are any knots left in the bamboo, then it will not become a flute. What is ‘emptying oneself’?

No personal desires, nothing personal. "I am not", or as they say in the Christian teachings, "I am dying, my Lord, thy will be done."

Thus, there are three stages of the guru and disciple relationship. The first stage, which is common to all, is "Me and my guru." The second stage is "My guru in me." The third stage is "I and my guru are one." In the Bible they said exactly these things. They said, "Father in heaven." Later they said, "Thy kingdom come." Thirdly, they said, "I and my Father are one." These three concepts, philosophies and attitudes should be according to your evolution. Not everybody can practise "I and my guru are one." Just saying it is not enough. One has to feel it. I can repeat it a hundred times, "I and my guru are one", but that means nothing, because we cannot feel that oneness with the guru. Therefore, we should try to feel him in us. Even this is difficult, because we have so many worries, anxieties, problems and preoccupations. We cannot feel him in us at all times. Consequently, we establish just a relationship with him, and the feeling is very simple: "I am the disciple, and he is the guru. He teaches me, I practise." Most people can practise this level of relationship. It will not interfere with their lifestyle.

Another important thing that we have to understand about this relationship is that the guru and disciple relationship is spiritual. It is not a physical relationship. It is not a social relationship. It is not a racial relationship. It is not a blood relationship. It is a spiritual relationship. Do you understand what the body, mind and spirit are? When we say 'spiritual relationship' we mean that we experience each other beyond the mind.

The link between a guru and disciple is also important. Some disciples who are devotional by temperament, follow the path of bhakti to their guru. However, devotion or bhakti is very difficult to practise. You can't have bhakti

by external ways. It is spontaneous. It is deep in you, and you have to experience it. Nobody teaches you how to love your children. Is there any ritual? Is there any training system on how to love your children? It is inherent in you and it is part of your being. Some people are devotional; they are bhaktas by temperament. But there are people who are not of this temperament. They work for their guru, that is their link. This is called service to guru. The first was devotion to guru, and the second is service to guru. By serving the guru directly or indirectly, personally or impersonally, they create a link.

I began thinking about the spiritual life when I was about eleven or twelve years of age, and I listened to many wise people to understand more about it. My mind was full of questions and I read every philosophy and religion available to me. I practised all that was possible from witchcraft to meditation, because my mind was full of questions. I also met very classically-minded and intellectual people. They could explain their fields to me very clearly, and I did understand intellectually, but I couldn't experience these things, and so they were not my gurus but my teachers. Maybe they were my guides as they were great scholars, but they were not my guru because what they said gave me knowledge but not experience.

When I met my guru, Swami Sivananda, I forgot all questions. I thought I would live with a guru and ask him this and that, and the guru would give me satisfying answers, and then I would have the experiences. I was foolish. I was approaching the problems intellectually and I wanted a spiritual answer. Therefore, nobody could become my guru. The fault was not with them, the fault was with me, because my whole approach was intellectual and logical, and maybe they were also not so strong. When I arrived in Swami Sivananda's presence, from the first morning of that day, I had no questions. From that day up to now I have

no questions. I only have answers. My question-box was closed and a great transformation took place.

When you stop questioning, that is the greatest transformation. It is said in the tradition of yoga that the guru is quiet and the disciple is quiet, and they just sit together and the disciple's doubts and questions are over. Spiritual experience is not an intellectual process. The more you try to solve a spiritual problem mentally, the more confused you get. The path to spiritual experience is to quieten the mind. I lived with my guru for many years. I had a lot of physical difficulties. I mean sickness. I became very weak and, from time to time, I used to have all kinds of physical problems. But I worked day and night with my guru. I forgot why I came to him. Before I went to him, I had already decided why I was going to him.

I used to work in the ashram like a slave in Rome or Egypt, and I had only those facilities in the ashram which a slave in Rome and Egypt had. But I was not the slave of passions; I was the slave of the guru. I was not the slave of an emperor or a political system; I was the slave of a benevolent master. I worked as a gardener, as a builder, as a labourer, as a bullock-cart driver, as a typist, as a stenographer, as a printer, as a translator, everything. After twelve years, he called me, and in five minutes or maybe less, he explained everything. When the disciple is ready, the guru is also ready. When the disciple is not ready, the guru prefers to wait. Therefore, there are many types of gurus according to the types of disciples. We must understand one important thing, that guru is my own Self. He is the highest guru. He resides in you in the form of light, in the form of knowledge. He is lighter than light particles. That spark of the guru is in everybody. You do not have to go anywhere in search of a guru. He is known as sat guru. He is known as the highest guru, and everybody must understand this very well.

There is a problem, however. Although the guru is within me, although the guru is within you and within everybody, we can't feel him. He is speaking to you, but you don't understand him. What he speaks is Greek and Latin to you, or French and Spanish, because your mind is gross. Therefore, you are not able to feel him and hear him. The external guru helps you to make your mind sublime and subtle. You try to purify your mind with the external guru. Then comes a moment when you begin to hear the inner guru. So, one of the most important functions of the guru is called 'the detonator of the inner guru'. You know what a detonator is? You detonate a bomb. The bomb will not explode without a detonator. You have to awaken the inner or sat guru. The external guru is the awakener and the detonator.

Q. How do we choose a guru?

Paramahamsaji: How do you choose a husband? You have to choose a guru on the basis of your spiritual devotion. First, you must do swadhyaya, the reading of spiritual books. Then you should practise satsang or have conversations on yoga. Then you must practise something every day. By this time you are ready, and you will recognize your guru. A person who is a spiritual seeker can always recognize his guru. But it is very important that you should not confuse the guru with a religious person, because religious qualities are different according to each religion. The discovery of the guru is the greatest discovery of a disciple.

Q. How can a disciple be helped to open his heart to his guru?

Paramahamsaji: Do not be too intellectual, just live with him, or follow his lessons and instructions and you will find that in the course of time, everything is happening by itself.

Q. What is the role of karma yoga and is it necessary?

Paramahamsaji: Karma yoga is action without attachment. Karma yoga is acting for spiritual growth. There are two paths, the path of karma and the path of yoga. The path of karma is the path of action, and the path of yoga is the path of internal awareness. Those who practise only karma do not experience higher things and those who practise only yoga, do not realize higher things. Those who practise only karma develop a lot of mental or spiritual darkness, and those who practise only yoga or only meditation also experience great darkness. Therefore, there should be a combination or synthesis between karma and yoga. Those who practise yoga and meditation, and at the same time devote themselves to work, make good spiritual progress. When you have achieved this synthesis, then you are a karma yogi.

In India, I had an ashram where I only allowed the inmates to practise yoga. There was not much work, and if there was work I tried to minimize it. We used to cook food once and eat two times. I used to ask them to practise yoga in the morning, evening, and night. People did not stay in the ashram. They came, they lived there, and then they went away, because they used to feel very restless and unstable. Then I created work in the ashram. I got a very big piece of land that required a lot of work. So much so that the people got tired. They became sick some time, but they stayed in the ashram because they were doing karma and yoga together.

Karma is the extroverted tendency and meditation is the introverted tendency, and they are the two balancing forces of each other. Too much meditation causes depression and too much karma causes tension. If you make a balance of both, then there is neither tension nor depression. The ratio between karma and yoga is very

important. The ratio between vegetables and salt is also very important. In one kilo of vegetables you cannot put another kilo of salt. In the same way, karma is the main theme of life. Karma is the law of the universe and karma is the basis of all evolution. Karma is not anti-spiritual. Karma does not degrade you or pull you down to hell. You have to add a little bit of yoga into it to make it sweeter. Ten minutes of meditation every day is enough, and the rest of the time you work.

Why are you working? This you will have to discover. "I am working to earn for my family"; "I am working in order to gain financially and economically"; or "I am working because I want to keep my mind preoccupied." These are some of the answers. You try to find out why you are working. If you say, "I am working for money", okay, suppose somebody gives you two million drachmas, and you don't have to earn money or work any more. Then you will see how important karma is. Therefore, you are not working for money. No, you are not working for money at all. Then why are you working? Try to discover the purpose of karma. When you are able to realize the purpose of karma, there comes a point when you will have respect for karma. This is the central teaching of the Bhagavad Gita, which is a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. "Why should men work?" "Is work helpful in spiritual life?" The answer is 'yes', but it should be combined with yoga.

Q. I have heard that in samadhi one has total awareness about everything, and at the same time, forgets everything. How can one combine these two conditions?

Paramahamsaji: Samadhi is of two types. One samadhi is obtained through the practices of hatha yoga only. Another samadhi is achieved through the practices of raja yoga. Some people control the pranas first and so control

the mind. Some control the mind first and automatically control the prana. Those people who achieve samadhi through the practices of hatha yoga, experience one samadhi in which they know nothing. There is no outer awareness, no inner awareness, nor any self-awareness, and there is no time-place awareness. It is like being dead. This is one type of samadhi. This samadhi is achieved through the practices of hatha yoga.

First, purify the physical body. This can be done through the shatkarmas or the six practices of hatha yoga. Then practise pranayama, mudra and bandha. The practice of pranayama should be gradually increased, and these practices should be done in cold places. Then you will develop hatha yoga samadhi. Sometimes for one or two days you can stay in samadhi and then come out. In the tradition of yoga, this is considered a lower or inferior samadhi. It is easier, people can do it.

The second samadhi is known as raja yoga samadhi. Its real name is nirvikalpa samadhi. In this samadhi, you are aware of the inside and you are aware of the outside; you are aware of everything. You are aware of the creator and the creation at the same time. You are aware of the transcendental reality and the external reality. Nirvikalpa samadhi is considered to be the higher samadhi. To achieve this samadhi, one has to practise raja yoga systematically. Raja yoga is an eight-fold path; it has eight stages. The first stage is called yama or self-control; the second is known as niyama or discipline; the third is asana or postures; the fourth is pranayama or breath control; the fifth is pratyahara or withdrawal of the mind; the sixth is dharana or one pointedness; the seventh is dhyana or total awareness; and the eighth is samadhi or cosmic awareness. The book which deals with raja yoga is called Yoga Sutras. These are yoga sutras by a great yoga exponent, Sage Patanjali.

Q. When kundalini is being raised, either through practices or in another way, how can we control this, and how can we cope with the symptoms?

Paramahansa ji: Awakening of kundalini is an exploding experience. You can do nothing about it. You should do nothing about it. It is a great power. When it explodes, it explodes. The only thing for you to do is not to do anything. When you know that something is happening, then, for some time, say about a week, you should withdraw yourself

from your day-to-day life, because it takes some time for the awakening of kundalini to settle. When there is an explosion in a mountain, there is a lot of dust in the atmosphere. What will you do? Better wait. In a day or two, it will settle. Therefore, to those who experience the awakening of kundalini, I give only one piece of advice: don't go to your work for three or four days, just stay at home, or if you have access to an ashram, go to the ashram. That's all.

—Satsang at Nepheli Hotel, Thessaloniki, 13 July 1984



Impressions

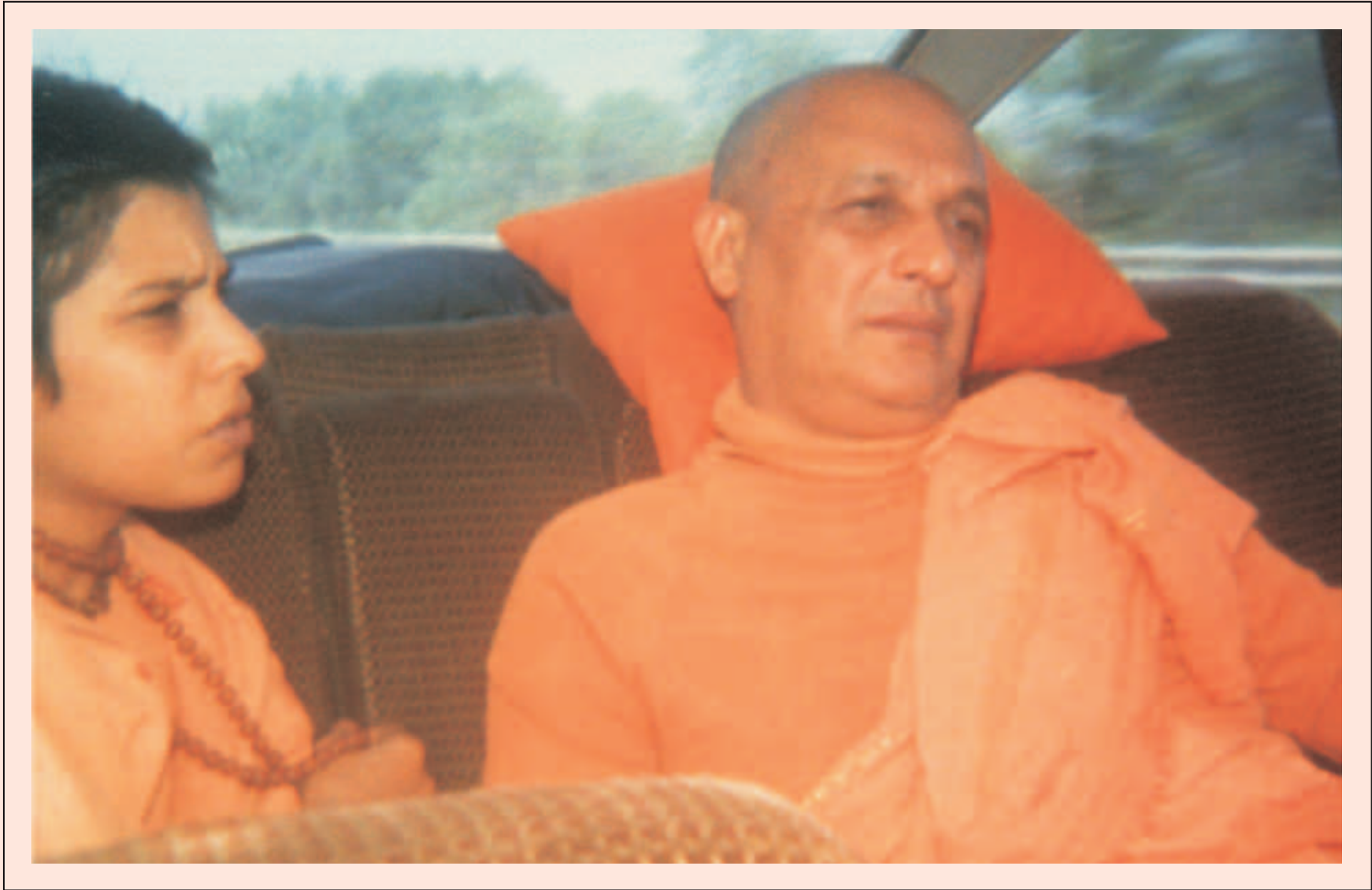
Winning hearts

Swami Sivamurti speaks about Paramahamsaji's ways of winning hearts.

Paramahamsaji's mission takes him all around the world to most countries. I recall that in Crete, Paramahamsaji had lectures in the four major cities of the island: Chania, Rethimno, Iraklio, and Agios Nikolaos. We didn't have a car in those days, so we had to organize everything by radio taxi. It was very hot, around 39°C–40°C, but Paramahamsaji was asking for heaters in his hotel room. The reception said, "Ma'am, we packed all the heaters away for the winter." I said, "Can't you take the heaters out, please, because we have a gentleman here from India and he's used to a much hotter temperature." So the hotel manager retrieved heaters from storage, we dusted them, checked they were in working condition, and gave them to Paramahamsaji. I don't know if he used them or not.

Later we arranged for a taxi to take him to the next lecture in Iraklio. He and Swami Satsangi were in the backseat and I was in the front with the driver. It was close to midday and the temperature must have been over 40°C. The driver arrived fresh and cool in his air-conditioned taxi, but when we got in Paramahamsaji indicated to me that he preferred the air-conditioning to be turned off. "Would you mind turning the air-conditioning off?" I asked the driver, who wasn't happy with this idea. He complied but immediately rolled





down the windows. Paramahamsaji let me know that the windows should be closed. I asked the driver to do this. He said, "Do you want to kill your visitors?" He had already taken off his shirt because of the rising heat.

I said, "I'm sorry, but the gentleman in the back is used to living in high temperatures and this temperature is cool for him." All this time the driver was getting hotter and hotter, temperature-wise and anger-wise. He told me over and over that I wasn't a good example of Greek hospitality.

Paramahamsaji asked, "What's he saying?" I explained that the Greeks naturally talk a lot, and Paramahamsaji said, "Ah, he's saying his mantras." Then the driver asked me, "What are you saying? Are you telling him what I'm saying? Are you showing a Greek guy in a bad light?" He kept going on and on and I said eventually, "No, I just told him that you were repeating the name of God."

The temperature in the car continued to rise and then Paramahamsaji started to wind down the back window. As he did, the driver got a blast of cooler air and I looked around. Paramahamsaji said, "Oh", and quickly wound the window back up. So it appeared to the driver that my action was one of disapproval and confirmed to him that turning off the air-conditioning and keeping the windows closed was my idea.

That was enough for the taxi driver. He stopped, got out of the car and got me out of the car and said, "You have no right to treat your guests like that. They won't ever come back to Greece if you treat them like that."

Paramahamsaji sat with no expression on his face and asked, "Sivamurti, is there something wrong?"

The taxi driver got Paramahamsaji and Swami Satsangi out of the car, opened all the windows, got

everyone back in the car and we travelled the rest of the way with the windows open. The transformation in the driver was remarkable. After having got the anger out of his system, he became a different person. Of course he thought I was the wicked one in the story, and he went out of his way to make Paramahamsaji comfortable. His attitude turned into that of a disciple. He offered tea, water, and other refreshments. He opened the car doors and he helped Paramahamsaji out, he carried his luggage. By the end of that journey, Paramahamsaji had won another heart. He won hearts wherever he went in the most extraordinary ways.

That first encounter

Swami Vedavyasananda describes her first sight of her guru.

Perhaps one could have a glimpse of Paramahamsaji's greatness through the different ways he has influenced the lives of people on this earth with his presence. My case is one of the numerous cases of his disciples. It all started on an ordinary day in May 1984. In those days, I was leading what is commonly-called a 'normal' life, that is, I had received a good education and was pursuing the career of an architect. I was working at the office that day when my phone rang. It was a friend, whom I went to yoga classes with, to inform me that the guru was arriving that day in Athens for a visit. In those days, Swami Satyananda's arrivals and departures were not publicly announced as he didn't like people flocking to the airport. I felt a compulsive urge to find out more about his arrival and I wanted to see him, because it was only photos that I had seen of him up until then. Without a second thought, I

picked up the phone and rang the ashram. The person, a swami taking care of the reception at the time, who picked up the phone, gave me the flight number and the time of his arrival immediately. Such immediacy does not usually happen at the ashram. Believe me, this was the first, and possibly the last time I got any such information so quickly from the ashram!

I used to be the sort of person who could not regard work as a second priority. However, surprisingly this time, I locked my office without a second thought and took a taxi to the airport. My mind was only thinking of him, although I had no connection at that time, other than being a yoga student, who was not interested in having a guru or entering into a guru-disciple relationship.

I arrived at the airport on time and saw Swami Sivamurti with a group of sannyasins there waiting for Swami Satyananda. I knew that I wasn't supposed to be there or even know about his arrival, so I made sure that I stood behind a large column to prevent my presence from causing any difficulties. Then, I saw him appearing in the distance among a crowd, accompanied by Swami Satsangi. My feeling was, and still is, beyond any words; my heart was jumping, I thought it would leave my chest. It was him! Who? Even though I didn't know who he actually was intellectually, still "It was him"! It is certain that only my heart knew who he really was, and not my mind. I followed him, making sure that I was well hidden behind columns and among people in the crowd, but I could not take my eyes off him.

He made his way out of the airport towards a car that was waiting for him. I was following at a distance, making sure that no one had noticed me. I saw him and

the rest of the people sit in the back of the car. Now it was dusk and I could only see the back of his head. As I was immersed in all of this, I completely lost track of time and space and, for some moments, I saw him turn his head fully in my direction and look at me with a big smile, and then he waved to me, with his hand, in a way one would do to an old friend! This was the start of our relationship, and the birth of my spiritual life.

From then on, and over the years, my life has changed in ways that I couldn't possibly imagine. Although my mind has many times resisted any changes from a so-called normal life, or the transformation from a career as an architect to that of a yoga teacher and a sannyasin who has lived in an ashram for thirteen years, I realize now that my heart was won once and for all during that first encounter. This is how it will be next time that our paths cross, because our hearts always recognize each other, no matter what.

The first guru

Swami Vedavyasananda pays a tribute to Swami Jagadamba Saraswati

The close relationship between Swami Jagadamba and Satyanandashram Hellas is a part of our early history. Like Swami Sivamurti (her daughter), Swami Jagadamba developed a deep relationship with the Greek people and they with her. She visited Greece many times and stayed in the ashram for extended periods. Although life in the ashram, in those days, was not always very comfortable, she lived and worked as we did.

Swami Jagadamba was a very wise woman who taught the young residents and inexperienced sannyasins many things. She came from a yogic

background in Australia, and taught us her most effective lessons through example. She lived and breathed the teachings of yoga.

As well as her gifts of wisdom, compassion and strength, Swami Jagadamba also contributed very generously towards the construction and maintenance of our ashram buildings.

Paramahamsaji once asked Swami Sivamurti who had taught her spiritual knowledge. She replied, "My mother" and Paramahamsaji replied, "Oh yes." So many times, Paramahamsaji has taught us that the first guru is the mother. He gave her the name of 'Swami Jagadamba' which means 'the mother of the world'.

In recognition of her profound contribution to Satyanandashram Hellas and the Greek people,

we named the central building of the ashram, Jagadamba Mandir.

Chronicles

It was a momentous year for Satyanandashram Hellas. Swami Satyananda's six-week visit to Greece reached its climax at the celebrations for Guru Poornima. Numerous press and television interviews were given, and a number of people were initiated into poorna sannyasa and karma sannyasa. Swami Satyananda travelled on to France and Switzerland, accompanied by Swami Satyasangananda. After relinquishing the presidency of Bihar School of Yoga, he established Sivananda Math and the Yoga Research Foundation.



Swami Sivamurti with Swami Jagadamba

Greek knowers of Truth: Alexander the Great

Alexander III of Macedon (356–323 BCE) is known as Alexander the Great and was born in Pella and taught by Aristotle. He succeeded to the throne of Macedon in 336 BCE, after the assassination of his father, Phillip II of Macedon. He died thirteen years later in Babylon on either 10 or 11 June in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II. He is one of the most famous figures of antiquity and is remembered for his tactical ability, for his conquests, and for spreading Greek culture into the East, marking the expansion of the Hellenic civilization and the foundation of western culture. Alexander became legendary as a classical hero in the mould of Achilles, and features prominently in the history and myth of Greek and non-Greek cultures. He was never defeated in battle, and was one of the most successful commanders that ever lived. Although only thirty-two when he died, Alexander's impact on western culture endured for centuries.

Alexander the Great and India

The first record of contact between Indian thought and that of the West occurred in the time of Plato and Aristotle. The Greeks called the Indian yogis naked philosophers or gymnosophists and they admired them for their profound wisdom. Alexander the Great (who possessed an open mind and a passion for philosophy) invaded India in 327 BCE. Although his stay in India was short, he had

philosophical discussions with yogis and other wise men and some of these events are recorded by Plutarch.

When Alexander left India, Kalyan accompanied him as his guru. He was known to the Greeks as Kalanos, due to his custom of always uttering the name of Kali when greeting anyone. In Susa, Persia, Kalanos sensed the time of his death was near. He said farewell to all but Alexander. He just looked at him and said, "I shall see you later in Babylon." Then, in front of the entire army, he walked into his funeral pyre and allowed himself to be consumed. A year later Alexander died in Babylon. The prophecy had been the guru's way of telling his disciple that he would be with him in both life and death.

Swami Satyananda on Alexander the Great

- When Alexander the Great went to India, he took with him many outstanding philosophers and wise men from Greece. In India, they had classical and academic encounters with the gurus and wise men. This classical encounter was based on one fact, whether objective experience is final, or is there something more than that? Is the mind the only tool of knowledge; is the mind the only tool of experience; is the mind the only tool of cognition; or is there something more, and something beyond the mind? Finally, Alexander was conquered. He defeated the king of Punjab in a military encounter, but he could



not defeat Hindu thinking, because the reality you are talking about, the truth you are talking about, and the facts you are talking about, are pure minds.

- Almost 2,300 years ago, when Alexander the Great returned from India, he brought with him his guru whose name was Kalyan. In Greece you call him Kalanos. For him he established an ashram and wise men from Greece used to visit him from time to time. Also, when Alexander the Great went to India he took many wise men from Greece. With these wise men in his retinue he met many gurus in India and discussed with them the problems of philosophy and the problems of spiritual experiences.

Sayings by Alexander the Great

- I am indebted to my father for living, but to my teacher for living well.
- I would rather excel others in the knowledge of what is excellent than in the extent of my powers and dominion.
- If I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes.
- Remember upon the conduct of each depends the fate of all.
- There is nothing impossible to him who will try.



1985

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Day-by-Day Itinerary

Swami Satyananda was accompanied by Swami Satsangi for his eighth visit to Greece. He presided over Guru

Poornima celebrations at the ashram in Paiania and inaugurated the ashram on 29 June

Saturday, 29 June

- Inauguration of the ashram as 'The True Bliss Ashram' by Swami Satyananda. He emphasized during the proceedings that he did not want charity from his disciples, but sacrifice. Over 800 were present.

Sunday, 30 June

- Satsang with Swami Satyananda at Paiania ashram. He was asked about ecology and environmental pollution. He stated that the central point of ecology is that one must accept the atman, or spirit in each and in everything in the universe.
- Swami Satsangi gave a discourse on the types of guru-disciple relationships. It was proffered that the highest union between the guru and disciple is the one where the guru thinks and the disciple acts, and that this is a very rare type of disciple, which requires unquestioning faith.

Monday, 1 July

- Satsang with Swami Satyananda at Paiania ashram. Approximately 800 attended. He answered a wide range of questions from faith in guru to awakening kundalini.

Tuesday, 2 July

- Guru Poornima, Satyanandashram, Paiania. Guru Paduka Pooja was conducted on this most auspicious day. Swami Satyananda gave diksha.

Wednesday–Sunday, 3–7 July

- Tattwa Shuddhi seminar, Satyanandashram, Paiania. Swami Satyananda presided over the tattwa shuddhi and kriya yoga practices given by Swami Satsangi and Swami Sivamurti. Swami Satyananda

emphasized the importance of the guru-disciple relationship for imparting the knowledge of kriya yoga and tattwa shuddhi. Swami Yogabhakti and Swami Devatmananda, both from France, and Swami Yogashakti from Colombia attended Guru Poornima and the tattwa shuddhi seminar.



Brochure advertising Guru Poornima at Satyanandashram Hellas, Paiania

From the Media

Opinion, Alexandroupoli's newspaper, 12 June 1985

Q. What does yoga have to offer to education?

Paramahamsaji: When you want to make a garden, a line of flowers or trees, what do you do? Do you simply spread the seeds around? This is what many would do, but nothing would grow. You have to first prepare the earth, aerating and weeding it. It's then that you can sow the seeds, and beautiful flowers and trees full of fruit will sprout. This is what you have to do with children's mind. In the science of yoga there are specific branches that control the effectiveness, conduct and receptivity of the brain. When a child is dull, this doesn't necessarily mean that there is a basic fault in the brain. It could just be the amount of energy channelled in the brain.

With pranayama the energy reaches all parts of the brain, increasing and awakening its full efficiency. If we separate the whole brain into ten compartments, then in a normal brain only one compartment is functioning and is in a position to deal with the everyday activities of life. The rest of the nine compartments are silent. Sometimes the brain is in a position to transfer an electromagnetic wave from one of these silent components. At that time a flash, an idea is created, and one is transformed into a great scientist. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the silent areas in the brain if you want to express the genius that exists in you. In order to succeed in this, we need a systematic procedure which will awaken all the silent areas of the brain, like yoga.

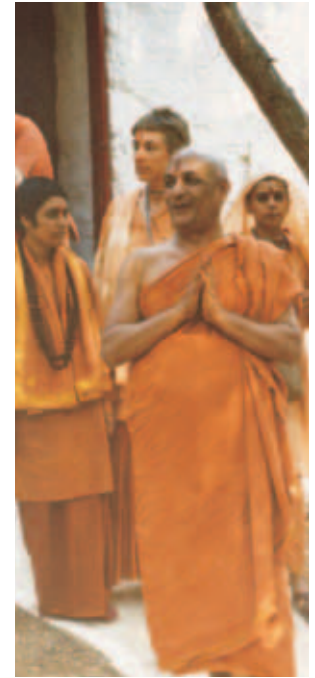


The primary problem of children is that they are endeavouring to obtain a first class memory, but they fail. Once, Swami Vivekananda went to an American University and borrowed a thick volume. The next morning he gave it back and the librarian asked him, "What did you do with this book?" Swami Vivekananda said, "I read it all." "Impossible!" the librarian replied. "Ask me anything from any page you want." The librarian did that and later wrote, "I've never seen such a man. He looks at a page and then remembers it." This is a photographic memory. With the help of yoga, a very strong memory can be developed in children.

Adults tend to believe that they own great wisdom, and that it is their duty to enforce the right way with their children. It could be that the children are thinking in the right way and we are in the wrong. We must not suppress the children. The children have to be disciplined through indirect methods, and it is better to offer them education in spiritual life and access to yoga from the beginning. Little by little, discipline your children, and you could achieve this by living a spiritual and disciplined life yourself, and setting an example for them.

The Danish government was perhaps the first to establish the yogic discipline officially. It edits leaflets about yoga, and addresses them to all citizens once a year. Northern Ireland's Ministry of Education and Health have been doing the same. In the UK, local governments have introduced yoga to night schools. These examples show that not only individuals and instructors, but governments have also started to think about yoga.

Swami Satyananda at Satyanandashram Greece 1985



Inauguration Speech

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

It was felt for a very long time that we must have an ashram in Europe. Yoga aspirants are now spread throughout Europe. I have been travelling here since 1978, but this is the first place where an ashram in its nearly strict sense is coming into existence.

A building does not make an ashram. Even the teaching of yoga does not make an ashram. An ashram is not a health resort, it is not a monastery, it is not a church, it is not at all a sanctum sanctorum. It is a place where people work together and live together with a spirit of utter selflessness. In addition to selfless work, a minimum possible discipline is attached to ashrams. I have visited most countries in eastern and western Europe. There are very good yoga institutions or yoga schools everywhere, but I have a vision of my own about ashrams.

When I was nineteen I joined an ashram in India and that moulded my whole thinking and personality. What I have been able to give and what I have been able to create is not because I was qualified, but because the ashram made me capable of performing that. My guru, Swami Sivananda, is well known all over the world and he was beyond every sect, every religion and denomination. We disciples worked for the ashram day and night. It is exactly that idea of the ashram which I carry in my mind all the time. Even if there are no sannyasins with shaved heads or with guru dress, still there can be an ashram.

It is the spirit of selflessness that makes an ashram. It is one-pointed devotion, dedication and sacrifice which creates an ashram. If one has an ulterior motive behind creating an ashram it will not be an ashram at all. Name

and fame are not at all important, that is all vanity, vanity of all vanities. In an ashram the totality of your dedication and devotion creates a divine atmosphere. "Let people come from every race and religion to my ashram." This is called universality of spirit and I was looking for this for many years.

Swami Sivamurti had to live in India and had to visit India several times. She could not possibly complain, "Oh, I have no money." Where there is a will, there is a way and there is money. Then I sent her to Australia because there we have the most prosperous tribe of ashrams, hundreds of swamis and thousands of karma sannyasins and tens

of thousands of initiated disciples. There a sannyasin can go to school with a shaven head and teach, in a normal school, not a yoga school. I sent her to Australia and she lived in those ashrams for some time, then she had to accept the challenge of the Greek mentality.

Things should not be easy in life. Those who want easy success do not succeed ultimately. Anywhere, in any station, in any area of life, you must remember that challenge is the key to great success. It is not necessary for me to give you in detail the challenges she faced here for many years. I would also not tell you the challenges I faced along with her. There is only one secret of meeting



the challenges of life: one has to be sincere and one has to be innocent. Crooked people do meet the challenges of life for some time and do succeed, but it is only the innocent people, who are childlike, who can effectively meet every challenge.

In February this year she came to London and sought my permission to purchase this land and build the ashram here. In about one week she prepared the plan and tried to find out how to raise the money to purchase it, and it was done. Sometime in March she started the work of construction and in June you are here and I am here. Only three days ago when I was here, this hall was absent. It was non-existent. They were raising something here and it was all a mess, and today you are here. This means that sincerity and innocence is a contagious disease. It is something that does not isolate you from others and does not isolate others from you. There are many karma yogis who joined hands in order to bring this into shape today.

When I wrote to Swami Sivamurti from India that I needed a certain swami to come to India and commission the new computer which we have installed in the ashram, in spite of the heavy demand for him, he was sent there. I did not really need him because I know about computers myself. Swami Satsangi is a qualified computer operator. In the Munger ashram there are so many qualified swamis as you know, but I wanted to hear from Swami Sivamurti, "I can send him, but because I am preparing for Guru Poornima, it will not be possible."

Sacrifice

What is the definition of sacrifice? You have only two loaves of bread and somebody comes to you for them. If you give, that is called sacrifice. If you have ten loaves of bread and somebody comes for two loaves from you



and you give, it is not sacrifice, it is called charity. I don't want charity from my disciples, I need sacrifice, and she sacrificed a most important swami from this ashram right at the moment when she had to prepare this colossal organization.

I am not praising Swami Sivamurti, I am hitting at you. I am not praising Sivamurti; it is a hit at you, at everybody. Take it personally. One thing you must remember: a disciple has nothing to acquire and a guru has nothing to

keep in the pocket. That is true, not only with guru and disciple, but with everyone.

What did you bring when you were born? What will you take with you when you die? You are not those Egyptian pharaohs taking gold with you. You will be put into a box. Then why do we insist on our personal acquisitions? Why is our sense of security based on something which is not permanent? It is one's way of thinking that is important and not the things which one has.

Bliss

So, I have come to inaugurate this ashram and it is called 'True Bliss Ashram'. This is also very important for all of us to understand. The pleasures that are fleeting and temporary are not the truth. The happiness which you get from the world is relative; it is dependent on your friends, on money and other things, but there is a permanent state of experience called ananda. Ananda is not felicity or ordinary happiness; it is a permanent state of experience which does not change at all.

You may have heard about a great saint called Saint Francis of Assisi and the type of life he led. Perhaps you would consider that to be unhappiness. You would consider that to be misery. No, it was not, because once you have attained that permanent state of mind, then nothing

matters in life, and that permanent state of mind can be experienced only when you have experienced your Self.

Knowledge of one's Self is the ultimate way for that experience. You do not experience your body, certainly not. You do not experience your mind. You do not experience anything which is material. It is in the form of a sound, or a transcendental feeling, or the void, or a universal experience. I don't really know how I am going to explain it to you, but during that moment of experience, this man is not there. This is my limitation. The body is my limitation. The body is your limitation, and you have created many more limitations. They are psychological limitations, emotional limitations, and these psychological and emotional limitations are experienced as 'I'. When you think 'I', you think of the body, the name, the place, but beyond

this there is another existence. That existence is known by different names: transcendental experience, paradise, heaven, nectar, immortality, God. It is an experience. It is for this that all of us are striving. Therefore, our sincerity must be directed to this purpose. Why do you practise sadhana? For this experience of ananda. This true and ultimate and absolute state of experience is the goal of everybody.

International yoga

This ashram, which is now almost getting ready, with the good wishes of everybody, is dedicated to that purpose. I must tell you that I am not a religious preacher and I have never practised any religion in my life. I have never visited a temple or a church because I feel that I am everything. You keep on searching and searching for something for the whole lifetime, but ultimately you have to find it within. I am the centre and not the circumference. Man is not the circumference. Man is the centre and the universe is the circumference. This is the point which I have been emphasizing every time.

I have never cared to denounce any religious path because I am an Indian. We are taught from early childhood that every religion is true. Every day in the morning and every night we chant a few lines which say that there are different paths to the same goal. Attitudes are different, inclinations are different and capabilities are different, and accordingly, the paths are also different. Just because the paths are different does not mean that the destination will be different. Mankind, although divided by religions, is one. Mankind, divided by nationalities, is one. Mankind, divided by colours, is one. Therefore, the path which I am talking to you about is not the path to a particular religion; it is the path for the whole of mankind.

I am sure that Swami Sivamurti and all the swamis who are working and who will be coming to the ashram



will remember this truth. The inmates in the ashram and guests should remember that this is not a place to judge. Here people come in order to achieve peace of mind. Here people come in order to shed the exhaustion of life. Swamis have come from Italy, England, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Colombia, and many more will be arriving tonight and tomorrow. Even as all the streams emerging from east, north, west and south, ultimately merge and mingle with the ocean, in the same way, the swamis coming from so many different lands can mingle with me in Greece.

Continuing mission

All of you from other parts of Europe must know that Greece has a great history and it has exercised the greatest influence on European culture and civilization for thousands of years. Even as the stream of knowledge flowed from Greece in historical times, in the same way let it flow now and let the message of yoga spread from Greece to the whole of Europe.

We in India know about Greece as one of our relatives. There was a time when India and Greece had very intimate relations. The most outstanding emperor of India was Ashoka the Great who built the Ashoka pillars throughout the country. He was the most powerful Indian emperor. He accepted the Buddhist way of life of non-violence. He sent missionaries to China, Japan, South-East Asia and the Middle East. He was half Indian and half Greek. His grandmother was from Greece, her name was Helena. She was the wife of the Indian emperor Chandra Gupta.

Much before that, Alexander the Great came to India. He was a pupil of the great philosopher, mystic and thinker, Aristotle. When Alexander was in India there was a good exchange of letters between them on spiritual matters like yoga. Alexander was so impressed

that when he returned he brought back with him a guru whose name in Greek chronicles was cited as Kolonos.

I can go on endlessly about the connections between Greece and India and these are not cock and bull stories. I am citing from the chronicles which you can find in any library or museum. Therefore, I believe that yoga will be spread from Greece by the enthusiastic people throughout the West.

I have so many ashrams throughout the world that it will not be possible for me to come to Greece even once in ten years. Moreover, in India the work is growing so much that my presence there is much required. Therefore, all those people who have come from various parts of Europe must remember that in the future, if at all, I might only come to Greece. That means I will come to Europe by visiting Greece.

Those of you who have not watched my personal life will not know that I can hardly get even three hours of sleep. I have to write so much, I have to read so much, I have to hear so much, I have to decide so much that it takes me from dawn to midnight. Most of you know me as a yoga teacher or as an expert in yoga, but you are not aware of my other side. There are hundreds of boys in India to whom I give scholarships for education. This is my personal activity. I don't talk about it, but today I am talking. There are thousands of boys and girls to whom I give clothes to wear when they don't have any, because that is my personal hobby. If somebody has to be operated on for appendix, or hydrocele, or gall bladder, or this or that, I have to decide how much I have to spend on them and that takes time. I have to organize doctor, hospital, diagnosis, money, after-care, everything.

I keep my yoga activities completely separate. That is one part of my mind, that is what my guru told me to teach you. However, everybody has a hobby and



my hobby takes so much time and money, and then if I stay in Greece or London or France, who is going to work? So far I have not involved any of my disciples in this work. Not one disciple have I used for this purpose because this is my personal hobby. I take the money in my pocket and I give the money out of my pocket,

Munger ashram does not even know about it. My nearest disciples don't know about it, and I consider that to be my yoga.

I don't want you to come into it, no! I am not asking you for any assistance. I am not hinting for you to give me money. Where there is a will, there is a way, there is

money, everything. I am telling you this because I have already crossed the threshold of my sixty years and I must have some time for my own hobbies. So, next time we shall again meet in Greece.

—Talk at the inauguration of Guru Poornima seminar,
Satyanandashram, Paiania, 29 June 1985



Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. When I am with you my mind becomes quiet, but I feel restless when I am away from you.

Paramahamsaji: When you are in a desert you always feel thirsty, but when you are near a tap you never feel thirsty. This is the nature of the mind. When you are closer to the point where you experience peace of mind, you are very quiet.

Q. Can you be in an ashram and still attend church?

Paramahamsaji: No problem, no problem! I can also go if I want to. I don't need a passport or a ticket; I can go to a cinema. I can go to a tavern. I can go to a railway station. I can go to any country. I can read any book. I can read the Bible; I can read Imitation of Christ. Religion or no religion, it is no barrier. Among sannyasins there are people who do not even believe in God, because they are free. On Sunday you can go to church, on Friday you can go to a mosque, on Monday you can go to a Hindu temple. No problem, they are all good places; they are not bad places.

Q. I feel alone, separate from everyone, even though I am participating.

Paramahamsaji: But it does not happen all the time? Rarely. Don't worry.

Q. Thank you.

Paramahamsaji: A disciple, if he just gives thanks, it is not enough. He has to give himself. He should be a first grade disciple, no English and no Italiano. I am quiet and you are quiet. That is the best.

Q. Who is qualified for karma sannyasa?

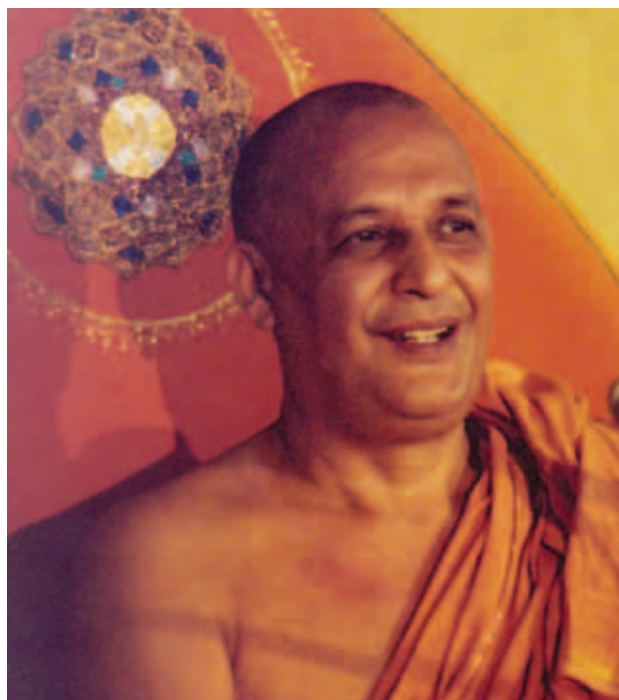
Paramahamsaji: In my opinion, everyone is qualified to take karma sannyasa. There are no prerequisites, no qualifications as such because you are a seeker. You are searching for a higher standard of life and experience. You are trying to go deep into your own self. You want to realize the inner spiritual life. Therefore, the question, "Who is qualified for karma sannyasa?" should not arise at all. Karma sannyasins only make one promise before their guru and it is a very simple one: "I will always walk one step further. Even if I slip back a little I will not retrace my steps."

A karma sannyasin is like that ant about which you might have heard in the parable. An ant was carrying a small piece of grain. It was trying to climb a wall. Twenty times it fell down, but the twenty-first time the ant succeeded in climbing the wall with that little piece of grain. There are emotional ups and downs. Sometimes you are confused, depressions come from time to time. Many times you lose faith in your own self, but again you must regain it. You must never lose courage. Life should not defeat you. Problems should not destroy you. Loss of property, death of the nearest and dearest, betrayal by the best friend, nothing should make you lose heart.



Everybody has an infinite chance to improve, and there is not just one life. There is not just one chance, but infinite chances. Grapes grow in one generation. In the next generation they are cultured by the scientists and better grapes can grow. In the next generation another culture can take place, you can have better quality grapes and a greater quantity of grapes in a minimum possible period. Even as it is with grapes, fruits and grains, so it is with human beings. You know that agricultural scientists have improved the quality of grains, vegetables, fruits, poultry, cattle. Why not human beings? Human beings can also improve, if not in this chance, the next chance; if not the next, then the next.

It is illogical to think that this is the last chance. It is very difficult for me to accept the idea that this is the last chance



because in this universe, everything is indestructible. Matter is indestructible, energy is indestructible, universes are indestructible, comets are indestructible, planets and stars and asteroids are all indestructible. Everything in this universe only changes form and name, not the essence. I am not talking philosophy, I am talking physics. Remember I am not talking philosophy or religion; it is science, physics. The total mass of the universe remains the same. The sun may die, the moon may be destroyed, the solar galaxies may be completely decimated, but the mass of the universe will not change even the millionth and trillionth of a milligram or gram, because the universe is not very big.

The form is very big. The names are many, the forms are many, but the essence of the universe is smaller than a point. It is so microscopic that you cannot see it with the eyes, you cannot see it with the mind, you cannot see it with a thought, you cannot see it with reasoning. You can only see it when the mind is destroyed.

When the senses are withdrawn, when the mind and intellect are withdrawn, when the ego is withdrawn, for a moment, everything vanishes. I die, you die. The whole thing, time and space, dies. At that time you can see the universe. Where? Outside or inside? Nobody can say, because there is no outside and there is no inside.

When I am here, then there is outside and there is inside, right? When I am no more, then where is inside and where is outside? You take a pitcher full of water and put it in a big water tank. Then there are two vessels of water, water in the tank and water in the pitcher, but when the pitcher is destroyed, there are not two vessels, there is only one expanse of water. Therefore this 'outside-inside' is only in relation to the ego, the 'I', the jivatma, the individual self.

This is the one obligation of the karma sannyasin to his guru. He need not make a commitment that he will pay

ten percent of his income to his guru. There is no religious commitment. There is no political commitment. The only commitment is, "Yes, I will take one step further."

Q. How can we accept and learn to live with our desires? How can we avoid feeling guilty about them and learn to use them in order to transcend them?

Paramahansa ji: It is a very small question, but the answer is not that easy. You cannot eliminate desires, it is not good. You should not eliminate desires, it is dangerous, but you should not have desires, otherwise you will be unhappy. Then what to do? You might jump from the frying pan into the fire? I can give you one suggestion.

This question has been answered in detail in the Bhagavad Gita and has also been answered in Yoga



Vasishtha. Those who say that desires must be renounced do not know the truth about spiritual life. Sometimes people undergo an intellectual exercise of renunciation of desires. They begin to think, "I don't want this. I should not have that." This is merely an intellectual process.

If you try to heighten your inner awareness, you will find that in the course of time, unnecessary desires automatically fall away from you. Even as a serpent throws away its scales at the proper time, in the same way a yogi, without fighting his own desires, gives up unnecessary desires. You do not know which are necessary desires and which are unnecessary desires. In many religions they teach that desires must be renounced and most religious teachers and philosophers teach renunciation of desires. Thereby a kind of suppression sets into the personality. So, those who want to be free from desires had better try a positive method.

I have a different philosophy altogether. You must have desires, and desires will bring you suffering. You must suffer, because suffering will open your inner eyes. A man who has no desires has no suffering. A man who does not suffer cannot evolve spiritually. All saints have suffered. Christ was crucified, Socrates, you know what happened to him, Mahatma Gandhi was shot. There are so many examples I can give you.

Never be afraid of suffering. Physical suffering is necessary for physical purification, karma, but nobody likes suffering. Nobody wants it. Do you pray to God every day, "God, make me suffer"? Do you ever say this? A good husband, a good wife, pretty children, a comfortable home, everything nice, no sickness, no quarrels, no divorce, no theft, no accident, and perhaps no death. No, this is not the right way!

What do saints pray for? "God, give me more suffering so I will remember you every minute of the day and night, God make me suffer more and more, physically, mentally

and emotionally, so that my soul will analyze, so that my soul will enquire, so that my soul then will become more and more self-aware." Those people who have suffered have reached the heights. Those nations who have suffered have also reached the heights.

Suffering makes you strong, but suffering is a product of desire. If you have no desire you have no suffering. Therefore, in my opinion, the person who has asked me the question should remember that I believe that one must have desires, but one thing you can do, you can dedicate your desire to a higher reality. You dedicate your desire to guru or God, "Let me have more money so that I can give something to my guru", "Let me have more money so that I can feed the hungry people", "Let me have more political power so that I can help many people", "Let me have more strength so that I can serve my wife, children and family."

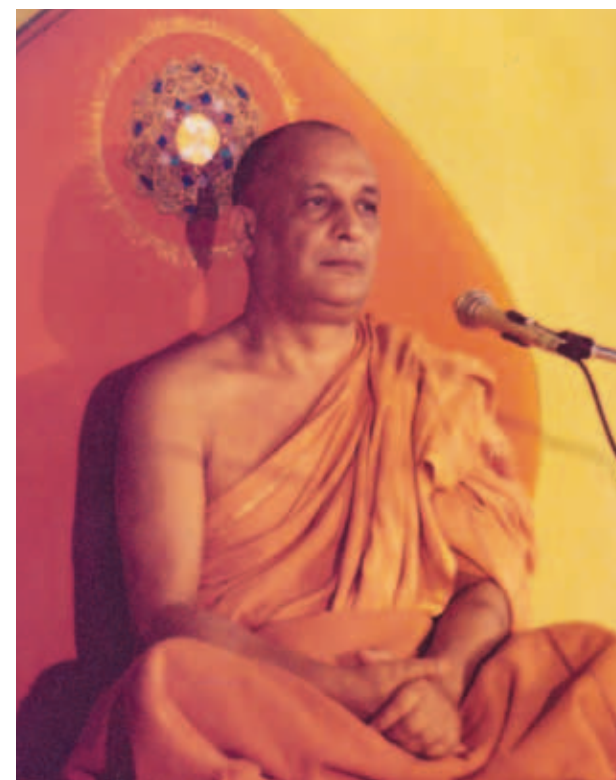
How many types of desire do you have, tell me? Normally people have three types of desire: desire for wealth, like money, property, car, house, building, farm, etc.; desire for sexual gratification; desire for progeny: children, tribe, race, nationality, so that all of us will become Christians, or everywhere we will have Italians or Greeks or Indians. "May my tribe increase", "May my nation become great", "May my family prosper." That's all. These are the three types of desire.

There is a rare fourth type of desire which is a special one: power, name and fame, like Alexander had, or "May I become the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization, or President, or Prime Minister of India or Greece or Italy or France."

Now, if these four types of desire are eliminated through the process of yoga, then everything will be destroyed. Imagine a family, a city, a country, imagine the whole world only happy. Of course it is not going to be, but if it happened I think there would be more problems.

Therefore, nature or your God has created suffering and for suffering you must have desires. You must desire to have a family, children, a nice home. You must desire to have a guru, you must have a desire to practise yoga and you must desire to have plenty of time to read sometimes: the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, philosophy, etc. Then you will come across a lot of suffering and this suffering will bring you nearer to your own Self. If you don't believe what I say, read the lives of saints.

Q. I am quite desperate about the ecological crisis in the world, our food and environment polluted, nature destroyed and dying. Is there any hope for mankind or



is the world becoming a large slum for a far too large population heading towards a lack of even pure drinking water, and shortly thereafter towards death and extinction?

Paramahansaji: This is a very important question. For about 150 to 200 years, European countries never thought about it and consequently every part of nature was destroyed here. Not only external nature, but even internal nature. I am not fanatic about ecology. First of all, I am an Indian from a country where seventy percent

of the population is just existing, where nearly ninety percent of the country is heat and dust.

We believe in the Ganga. We believe in the Himalayas. We believe in ashrams. We believe in meditation. We believe in a systematic worship of the divine in many forms. Therefore, ecology is something which we do not really understand, but it is a part of our culture. It is important to understand that nature is as important as we think we are.

Modern man in general, and western man in particular, has become very arrogant. In his arrogance he has begun

to think that he is the centre of the whole world. Whenever he likes he can shoot tigers, birds, leopards, crocodiles, or anybody. Whenever he likes he makes laws, uproots the trees and brings in other types of buildings and factories because he thinks that everything in this world exists for him. Is it not arrogance?

You think that trees exist for us? You think that these peacocks, birds, these creatures, these reptiles, snakes, flowers, exist for us? We come as a conqueror. We talk as a conqueror. We don't talk as a member of the whole of nature. The whole of nature is one family, the whole world is one country. Some live in forests; they are called tigers, leopards, kangaroos, etc., and we live in caves, we homosapiens. Somehow we became conquerors and we have tried our level best to destroy the intrinsic beauty of nature.

Food is an odd word today. You know, I brought my own rations from India. Oh, you may not believe it, because here there are chemicals in everything. Here your thought is also chemicalized. The dress is awkward. Oh, don't be offended. Everything is awkward, yet we are so proud of it. Therefore, scientists throughout the world are talking about a return to nature.

There is a natural way of living. First, spend more of your time outside, because that will give you more energy and freshness in the brain, lungs, heart and blood, and make your food free of chemicals. Try to develop biological food as we do in India. In the same way, try to meditate every day for half an hour at least, because inner ecology and external ecology are both important.

Another mistake modern man in general and western man in particular makes: he thinks that he alone can think. He feels that he alone feels. He thinks that he alone knows. "Oh, birds, no, they cannot think." Do you know that scientific experiments have proven that trees can also



see things like you and me? A tree is as intelligent as a human being, if not more so. Of course a tree is not as crooked as we are. There are enough scientific documents which go to prove this fact. The same is true about the animal kingdom and the same is true about everything. Even a block of stone has intelligence.

A stone boulder has intelligence, but what is intelligence? Your philosophy in the West has not explained what intelligence is. Even Greek philosophy has only gone up to intellect and reasoning. Of course you call it philosophy, but it has to be knowledge of the Self and not the knowledge of the intellect and not the knowledge of the mind. Do you speak philosophy or do you talk theosophy? Knowledge of divinity is theosophy and knowledge of the Self is philosophy, but how far could that great philosopher Emmanuel Kant reach? Up to pure reasoning, that's all. He spoke about pure reason.

That is exactly the basis of the mistake in modern science. The modern scientists thought matter was inert. Up to the time of the great scientist Isaac Newton, they thought that matter was matter, that's all. Of course scientists do not think that way today. Matter is not the ultimate form of the universe, matter is a form of energy. Scientists today talk about matter and energy. You know the famous equation $E=MC^2$? Even to this day the scientists are talking about matter, they are talking about energy, but what about intelligence? What about the spirit? What about the atma? What about the soul of a tree? What about the soul of matter? What about the soul of a bird, a buffalo, a cow, a donkey, a horse, or a pony?

Do you think that man alone has a soul? It's ridiculous. Man alone has a soul? You think this idiot man alone has a soul? This man who destroys his own brother has a soul? This man who divorces his beautiful wife for another girl has a soul? This man who develops nuclear bombs and

explodes star wars has a soul? This man who goes to America and kills millions of the Red Indians, finishes them off, has a soul? And these trees which give you beautiful mangoes and oranges and lemons and olives have no soul? This beautiful river which brings you so much water, upon which you live and without which you would die, has no soul? These horses which helped you conquer right up to the Punjab in India have no soul? These cows which give you milk, butter and cheese have no soul? You adorable and worshipful two-legged creatures, human beings, you alone monopolize that soul?

So, the central point of ecology is that you will have to accept intelligence, atma, soul, spirit, in each and everything in this universe. Don't destroy nature. What is the definition of nature, do you know? Have you ever thought what the definition of nature is? That which comes up by itself, which develops by itself, which is created by itself, that is natural. What is created by you and me and them, is not natural; it is artificial.

There are two great problems before humanity today. You will remember them: one, elimination of nuclear energy; two, the establishment of ecological union. These





two things are very important, other things are less so. They will solve most of the problems of humanity, but then it is only the yoga-minded people who will put it into practice. I told you I am not fanatic about ecology. It is my culture and my inheritance and heritage. We always believe that our ancestors were born and lived in deep, dark forests, mountains and rivers, and that my mother wore just one piece of cloth. 'My mother' means five thousand, ten thousand years ago.

—Satsang at Satyanandashram, Paiania, 30 June 1985



Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. Could you speak a little about Guru Poornima and the meaning of the Guru Paduka pooja tomorrow?

Paramahamsaji: When one is in search of a higher quality of life, then the first important thing is guru. There are various forms of guru. He is an inspirer of spiritual life and at the same time he is the light himself. Every year, throughout the world, disciples gather on Guru Poornima day in order to get in tune with the inner guru. Many thousands of gurus have been born on this planet in the last thousand years. Most of them do not live in the physical body today, but their spiritual light is immortal and all-pervading. Whether it is Krishna or Christ or Rama or Mohammed or any other guru, they are immortal. They did come in the physical body for a short span of time in order to inspire the ignorant people. Then they shed their physical bodies; now they live everywhere.

Guru represents the full moon, because guru represents the highest order of illumination for which a disciple is striving. What are we striving for? Are we striving for partial enlightenment or for total enlightenment? The full moon represents total enlightenment. The moon in yoga is known as soma, not the exterior moon but the interior moon.

In yoga there are two nadis, energy channels, known as ida and pingala, also known as the sun and the moon. The sun is called surya and the moon is called soma. These are the two nadis about which you may have read in your studies of hatha yoga and kundalini yoga. When the awakening of kundalini takes place, then both the nadis are in total balance. At that time kundalini passes through the sushumna nadi and then in ajna chakra it sees total

enlightenment. This experience of total enlightenment in ajna chakra is symbolized by Guru Poornima. It is not just a religious celebration. Guru Poornima belongs to each and everybody, it can come to you on any day. Tomorrow's Guru Poornima is a symbolic one, but the real Guru Poornima will be experienced by you when you experience enlightenment. That is not symbolic, but real.

On this symbolic Guru Poornima, disciples gather together to remember their guru. Even as you need a boatman or sailor to take the boat across the river, in the same way one needs a guru to cross this great maya and

this great world. The gurus have been the pathfinders. It is because of the gurus that you know there is a God, otherwise scientists say there is no God. There are invisible and transcendental things in life which are experienced by gurus and given to disciples.

Q. How does one know when one is ready to take full sannyasa? I have desires but I feel the path calls me, so there is conflict.

Paramahamsaji: Whenever you want to take sannyasa, you are ready. Sannyasa is not for perfect people, it is for



those who want to make their life spiritually dynamic. You think that after sannyasa you will not face passions? If you think this, you are the biggest fool. You think that after sannyasa, you will have no jealousy, no anger, no greed? You think that you will ever become an empty state? Oh, you are thinking of Utopia.

Sannyasa means accepting the challenges of life and fighting them. The ordinary man surrenders. A sannyasin does not surrender. He has problems, he has desires, he has passions, he has everything that everybody has, but he forges ahead. If he is like a bulldozer, he will make way.

You remember the story of Buddha? Have you read about the life of Christ? Christ was the son of God who was tempted by Satan. The son of God is tempted by Satan and you don't want to be tempted? You must be prepared to be beaten by Satan every morning. You know the life of Christ? He was tempted, but He was the son of God, so He couldn't be overcome by temptation, but I don't think that we are sons of God, are we? We are the sons of a father who himself was an ordinary man. We are the sons of a father who himself was very limited. What can you expect from this man, this ordinary man? Buddha was also tempted by satanic influences, they call it Mara, but he was very strong.

Whenever you want to take sannyasa, you are ready for it. However, many swamis will not give you sannyasa if you go to them because they are not prepared to share your follies. I consider my disciples as my children and I consider myself their mother, not father. The father gives one slap, the mother gives one kiss, because the mother is symbolic of eternal forgiveness. Therefore, whatever my sannyasins are, they are dearest to me and those who have worn this geru dress for even one night, I consider to be blessed.

How much I envy the good fortune of these little kids who come here with geru robes! At the age of three, at

the age of four, they are exposed to this transcendental philosophy. We grown-up people, when we were young, all we used to listen to was 'London bridge is falling down', or 'Jack and Jill went up the hill'. Our exposure was ordinary, but these little kiddies who come here, their exposure is philosophical, academic, technical.

Supposing you once took sannyasa by mistake and then you married a beautiful girl, what harm is there? Is marriage sin? If it is sin, then you are all sinners. If it is good, good; you are good people, and if I marry, I am also a good man. A sannyasin will produce a higher quality child because his awareness is great, his philosophy is great. He has striven for many years as a sannyasin, as a swami. Of course I have crossed the threshold of sixty years. Had it occurred to me at the age of thirty-five, I would definitely have produced one child. It did not come to my mind at all. Of course, now it is too late.

Q. Recently I have heard a lot about tattwa shuddhi. What is it exactly?

Paramahamsaji: Many times you hear about tantric rites. They say, "He is a tantric, he teaches tantra." Tattwa shuddhi is a tantric practice. This practice is important especially for those who are practising kriya yoga. It purifies the subtle elements which constitute this body, and when the higher yoga practices are taken up after tattwa shuddhi, the obstacles are just a few.

Q. I understand enlightenment as transcending the personality. How does kundalini relate to this?

Paramahamsaji: Kundalini is the dormant force in everybody; it is the forthcoming consciousness in human beings, and this forthcoming consciousness in human beings will take place in great numbers. Your children will be born having an awakened kundalini. You won't have to



go to the ashram then, because now we are teaching yoga to millions of people throughout the world.

Thousands and thousands of these swamis are spread throughout the world. We are a spiritual force, we are not any other force. In a few years, in twenty years, in thirty years, one hundred, two hundred years, more and more children will be born with an awakened kundalini. When these children are born with an awakened kundalini, their personality will be different from all of us today. We have a lot of fears, passions, and we are affected by disappointments. We are full of emotional and mental problems because our mind is not fully grown, our mind is undeveloped. When children will be born with fully developed minds, they won't have fears, they won't be insecure like us, they will be full of love and friendliness towards everybody.

Now we don't believe everyone. If anybody comes to my house in the night, I am not sure, he may be a robber or a dacoit. Due to fear we are not able to love everybody,

due to passions we cannot love everybody. Our love is very limited because we think, "If I love you, you may betray me." The awakening of kundalini is the secret of a personality which is broad and unlimited.

Kundalini wakes up in stages and you can experience it in waves. One wave of experience comes and goes away. For months and years you do not have any experience, then another wave can come. Sometimes, these waves of kundalini come in the form of sexual passion, sometimes in the form of very violent behaviour. Sometimes these waves of kundalini come to you as they came to Rasputin, sometimes they come to you as they came to Buddha and others. Saint Teresa of Avila used to get these waves, it came to her in the form of sickness. To some it comes in the form of madness; they behave like an insane person. To some it comes as it did to St. Francis of Assisi or to Ramakrishna Paramahansa. This wave is experienced by different people in different ways. You feel completely different, you don't feel the same thing. When this kundalini reaches the pinnacle, the ultimate point of perfection, then it gives you enlightenment. It makes you sober, it makes you steady. Such people often seem to be very good gentlemen.

It is important that those who are having experiences of kundalini, or those who want to awaken the kundalini, or those who are desirous of practising kundalini yoga, must get themselves attached to a guru, because he will tell you why it is happening. Many disciples come to me and say they are having so much more sexual problems after practising kundalini yoga. They feel very guilty about it. If I were not there, they would go mad. I tell them, "Look here, it's just natural. Let it happen." After some time they find out, "Well I was all right." Sometimes people who get these waves of kundalini want to eat and eat like an epicurean. I tell them, "It is perfectly okay", otherwise they have a lot of complexes about themselves.

A guru is necessary to explain these symptoms of the awakening of kundalini. The awakening of kundalini is directly associated with your inner and outer behaviour.

Q. Sometimes, when one is studying a lot, it is very difficult to concentrate on mantra. Is there some way we can hold on more to the awareness?

Paramahansaaji: A beginner should study also. At the same time, it is only by relentless practice that the awareness of the mantra will become constant. This constant, relentless awareness of mantra should be developed very gradually.

Q. You emphasize the importance of the outer guru, but what happens if I have a big problem and you are far away?

Paramahansaaji: A disciple, before he begins his yoga practices each day, must first remember his guru. In the night when he sleeps he should also remember him. In this way, he can maintain contact with the spirit of the guru, irrespective of the distance.

Q. What happens when one loses faith, when something enters the mind and says, "This is not my guru"?





Paramahansaaji: Perfectly all right. You can lose faith in your guru. You can abuse him. You can criticize him, but keep him as your guru. That's one thing, because if you divorce one guru you will divorce another guru also.

The idea, "I don't have faith in my guru", is the idea of your lower mind. This suggestion is given to you by your petty mind. You don't want to have faith in your guru, but you have faith in your mind? You must do the right thing. What is the right thing? Number one, "My guru is a rascal, a very bad man. I don't like him, I hate him, but on Guru

Poornima I surrender myself to him," and one day you will find out that what I told you just now was correct and right.

I will give you a parallel example. In India a husband and wife live together until death. They fight every day. They shout every day. For sixty years they fight. Sometimes he does not eat, sometimes she does not eat. Sometimes she does not cook food. Sometimes she does not talk to him for days together. Sometimes she runs away to her parents, but they live together as husband and wife. That is their definition of love.



Now, another case. Husband and wife: she gets angry and he gets angry and they divorce immediately. Then he is a divorcee and she is divorced. She loses her status and he loses his. You see, to be a husband is a status and to be a wife is a status. Then after two or three years he falls in love with another girl and she with another man. You say, 'my present husband' and 'ex-husband'. I call it assassination of emotions. You have killed your emotions. You are a murderer and you are going to be a murderer again and again and again.

In spiritual life, there is no question of divorcing that man. As a disciple, you have a right to abuse him, to criticize him or, if you want, print it in the newspaper or print books about him. Write down everything against him and circulate it to all the people, because nobody will purchase it. Talk badly against him twenty-four hours a day, that is another side of bhakti or devotion. A person whom you love, you think about all the time. A person whom you hate terribly, you think about twenty-four hours a day.

What is important? Total awareness of guru is not important. A good guru is not important. Thinking of a bad guru is important and thinking of a good guru is also important, but remember a very important point. If your guru is very good, the awareness will not be very deep. If your guru is bad, your awareness is going to be very deep. Now what kind of awareness do you want? Do you want light awareness or do you want deep awareness? I remember my enemy more than my friend. I am affected by my enemy more than by my friend. Therefore, guru is a guru for the whole lifetime and a disciple remains a disciple for the whole lifetime. Nothing can change this relationship. This unbroken relationship will follow you life after life.

Do you think I have come here just by accident? No, it is predestined. I am a part of your karma and you are a part of my karma. In many lives we have lived together. In many, many lives we have had interactions with one another and it is through that law of karma that we come to each other and not by accident. I can give you thousands of examples from my interactions with people in this life. There is an unseen law and that law is called the law of cause and effect, and it is equally applicable to each and every substance, to each and every object in this universe.

Therefore, through this law of cause and effect we have come to each other on this Guru Poornima eve. I do not consider this to be an accident. So, let us consider that we have lived together very many times and we have loved each other many times. In this life, even if you criticize me and abuse me, I don't mind because my guru told me that one who insults you and criticizes you, or who disregards you, is your best friend.

—Satsang at Satyanandashram, Paiania, 1 July 1985



Guru Poornima Day

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Today is Guru Poornima. From the dark night, today we have come to the full moon. In the same way, from ignorance, we should try to experience full enlightenment. Enlightenment is the fundamental right of everybody. Those who have renounced and those who have not renounced, both are qualified. Those who are very good people and those who are very bad people, all are qualified for enlightenment.

There are only two conditions for enlightenment. The first condition is faith that you will be enlightened. The second: my guru is within me. Everybody has a guru but people do not know it, therefore they start with the external guru. In the course of time, you will realize that I am not here; I am in you. This morning you worshipped your inner guru through the external guru. Whatever worship you did this morning you did it to yourself, but it appeared that you were worshipping somebody else.

Flowers symbolize the most tender emotion in man called bhakti. Money and gold represent all the trifling things you have within you. So, what did you offer to guru? You offered your heart, that is, the flowers. A flower is the most beautiful thing in the world, isn't it? The most tender thing, and bhakti is like that. Devotion and bhakti are the same. It is like the beautiful flowers that you offered this morning. Then you offered money. Money is the most trivial thing in life, the creator of all problems. It changes man from something to something else. It is the centre of passion and greed. It is the vitamin for your ego, and that is what you offered this morning. A disciple offers the best and the worst. The best means the flower, the

worst means the money, and guru receives both, just like a clean river and a dirty river both mingle in the ocean.

Guru Poornima is being celebrated in Greece for the second time. It is a gathering of sincere seekers and we hope to be here again from time to time. We are thankful to Swami Sivamurti and other sannyasins who have arranged for this spiritual feast. All of you must come to the ashram from time to time. You must have a small ashram in your own country and in your own city.

Ashrams must be the most simple places and they should be dedicated to spiritual practice. Every person, every nationality, should be able to come to the ashram. In your own humble way, you must maintain the simplicity of the ashram. You should not create many rituals, because an ashram is a lower middle-class culture. We are not bourgeois, but lower middle-class, you understand: factory workers, labourers, chemists. Of course, big industrialists come, but when they come they must live here like the small people because in an ashram there is no social and economic difference.

Those who believe in God can come to the ashram and those who are atheists should also come to the ashram. An atheist also has mental problems. He may not believe in God; that's all right, but he needs peace of mind, he needs sanity, he needs a one-pointed mind and a strong body. He should come to yoga. Therefore, an ashram should be not only for religious people, but also for those who are not religious.

Sannyasins must try to walk one step further every time because a great responsibility rests on the swamis. They are the moving ambassadors of peace, mental peace. Karma sannyasins must work for the growth of the ashram and the senior swamis must also realize that they have a great work to do.

That's all I have to say this morning to you all. Those of you who have come from France and Italy, Spain, England,

Yugoslavia, Sweden, Switzerland, etc., should now carry this inspiration to your respective countries and create some sort of ashram in your country. Let people come forward for sannyasa and karma sannyasa. Respect all systems, all philosophies and all religions. That is the only way for growth in spiritual life.

If you want, you can go to church on Sunday. If you want, you can read the Koran. If you like, you can read the Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads. All these are good things. You should see no difference in the different paths. That is how you go ahead in spiritual life.

—Talk at Satyanandashram, Paiania, 2 July 1985



Tattwa Shuddhi

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

This particular practice should have been revealed by me many years before, but it could not be done. A particular sadhana is revealed only through a disciple who has been able to practise it and derive its benefits. Even as my guru taught me kriya yoga and revealed the practice, in the same way, through Swami Satsangi, the practice of tattwa shuddhi is being revealed to all.

Tattwa shuddhi is a tantric practice. You may safely say it is not a yoga practice. In tantric sadhana the purification of the basic elements of the body and the mind is essential. Even as in yoga practices, shatkarmas are taught in order to purify the body, in the same way in all tantric practices, whether left-hand or right-hand tantra, the practice of tattwa shuddhi is a prerequisite.

There has been a complete misunderstanding, especially in the West, that tantra is for all, because it allows you to do all that your religion does not permit. They think that in tantric practice you can drink, you can have sexual intercourse, you can smoke hashish and cigarettes, do anything, because they misunderstand it. It is true that there have been certain tantric teachers who have used the five elements, the pancha tattwa, for their practices. Tantra talks about some such things which are thoroughly misunderstood and misused by people, because tantric practices need absolute discipline, more than what yoga demands.

Self-control

Sexual intercourse by one who has self-control and sexual intercourse by one who has no control of himself are two

different things. Sitting for deep meditation and having one or two puffs of hashish is an entirely different thing from standing out in the car park and smoking. What is the difference? Do you know? Do you understand? The difference is just this much: one has absolute control over himself and the other has no control over himself. Therefore, for the people who do not have self-discipline, who do not have control over the processes of their body and mind, tattwa shuddhi is very important.

This physical body is controlled by the five tattwas, five primitive elements, and if the five elements are purified by certain practices, it will eventually give you a pure body and a pure mind. When the body is purified in its elemental stage and when the mind is purified in its elemental stage, then the feelings and the experience are completely different.

When we use the words, 'purification of the body' we must understand it differently. Bathing is also an act of purification of the body. Shankhaprakshalana and other hatha yoga kriyas also are acts of purification of the body. Intake of pure food, pure air, pure water are also acts of purification of the body. However, the physical body is much more than what we understand about it.

We are talking about the physical body in its molecular form, and not merely about circulation, respiration, secretion, enzymes, hydrochloric acid, chemicals, hormones. We are not talking about the alpha, delta, beta or theta waves. We are talking about that particular realm of the body which is composed of the tiniest molecules, ones which you cannot see through a microscope.

The molecular structure of the body is the basis of human genetics. If you know how to change it you become something else. A criminal can become a saint tomorrow. An ordinary robber can become a prophet. A total change in the structure of the body, a total change in the



structure of the intellect, a total change in the personality structure takes place. Modern scientists are talking about the science of genetics. If you want your son to become an engineer you take a gene and get it injected. If you want your son to become a swami, a guru, a prophet, a messiah, inject that. It is not a joke! It is something the scientists are talking about today.

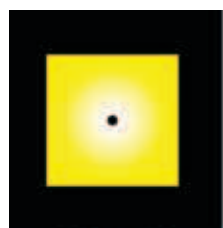
The subtle bodies

If you can study molecular biology then you can understand the tattwas better. Do you know that even outside the physical body there is a physical body where atoms are just bouncing? These powerful atoms which are just bouncing out of the physical body in millions and millions, outside of inside, what do you call them? Do you call them your body or do you call them something else? So, the physical body must be properly understood when you are practising yoga and tantra, or any higher practice for that matter.

The mystics in the East and the medieval West used to speak about the body. In the pre-Christian, Celtic culture they used to talk about ten bodies which were intrinsically

connected with each other. Of course, we have the visible, physical body. You cannot see the other body, but scientists, saints and scholars have spoken about it. In tattwa shuddhi you will be able to understand how to handle this molecular and subtle body.

You can influence your body by an injection, you can influence your body through aroma, fragrance, through



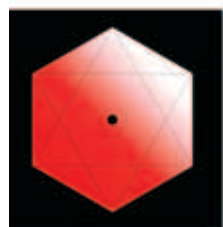
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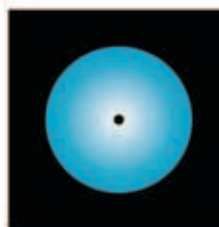
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visual form, through sounds, music, etc. Certainly you can influence your body by a thought, a feeling, or through belief or disbelief, through your fears, and finally by going into deep meditation. If a thought can influence your body, thoughtlessness also can. These statements which I have made just now are not just my personal view, but they are conclusions from the findings of scientists in present times.

The five elements which constitute the physical body relate to various colours. They are symbolized by certain geometrical formations, by certain sounds and by certain emotions. Therefore, you should not think that the body is just solid matter. One aspect of the body is solid matter, but there is another aspect which is not solid, which is transparent.

Enlightenment

Do you know that within this body thousands and thousands of suns can shine at the same time? I remember a note from the diary of the famous scientist Dr Robert Oppenheimer who was the first scientist to conduct a nuclear explosion in South America. The place where the experiment was conducted is known in Spanish as the 'Desert of Death'. When the first explosion took place, Dr Oppenheimer was watching it from sixty kilometres away. Immediately he took out his diary and wrote in it a verse from the Bhagavad Gita.

Dr Oppenheimer was a great Sanskrit scholar. That verse is in the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, when Arjuna had a terrible experience. In the middle of the battle, the commander in chief of the army is having a terrible spiritual experience and the Gita describes it thus:

"Even as thousands and thousands of suns would shine in the sky at the same time, that would be the brilliance of one who had enlightened the Self."

Can you believe that your body has the capacity of enlightenment of one thousand suns at the same time? Can you believe that in your physical body there is a point which, if it is triggered somehow, can shine like a thousand suns at the same time?

Necessity of purification

The purpose of tattwa shuddhi is to render the body pure to this extent. Of course, other forms of purification are also essential, but they are limited if tattwa shuddhi is not done. Yogis and tantrics develop psychic powers and the achievement of psychic power is unpredictable. We can't say at what time, at what point, people will have it. One may go on for forty-five, fifty, sixty years and not get anything or one might get it in a year or two.

Who is going to handle you? An impure man with psychic power becomes a Rasputin. There have been many powerful people in this world who have attained psychic power and have been terrors to humanity. Therefore, it is the duty of guru and of the disciple to practise all acts of purification so that you may achieve maximum possible control over the lower emotions of body and mind.

People with great discipline and self-control don't lose that control even if they are crucified. This was the philosophy of Christ and Gandhi. As they had a supreme amount of self-control they did not misuse their spiritual powers against their adversaries. Also, when you practise sadhana with an impure mind, you begin to have nightmares. So, tattwa shuddhi will help you a great deal.

Requirements for sadhana

I did want to teach tattwa shuddhi for so many years but I couldn't find anyone to reveal it properly. When I was in Australia, Swami Satsangi was with me. I was living in the ashram, which is in total wilderness. The nearest post office is twenty-six miles away, the nearest shop is

twenty miles away, the nearest road is twelve miles away. You can see big pythons and kangaroos the whole day long. It is such an isolated place that you can hear nobody except the people who live in the ashram.

Those who live in the ashram will testify to my statement. You can ask Swami Sivamurti. Nobody is going to stay near the ashram for the next hundred years. Many people have purchased land next to the ashram, but when they saw those big pythons and that red-bellied snake, they just ran away. In our ashram we keep a carpet snake in the storeroom because it doesn't allow rats to survive. Many people who go into the storeroom meet the snake and don't come back a second time.

The people who had purchased the land sold it to us at a throwaway price. We thought vegetables would be nice for the ashram because in the Australian headquarters we have weekend seminars. Every Saturday evening the ashram is full and every Monday morning it is empty, so these swamis grow vegetables for the weekend seminar people. They produced so many vegetables that we didn't know what to do with them. We have about twenty-six or thirty ashrams in Australia and we began to send the vegetables to them in trucks. Still we couldn't manage because these Australian swamis stayed in the plot the whole day and night by putting up a tent. They grew soya beans, onion, garlic, cucumber, Chinese spinach, ladies fingers and gents fingers! Finally, we had to put in a cold storage so we could store all the vegetables there. They are now sold through the ashrams, like books, records and cassettes.

In such an ashram I taught tattwa shuddhi to Swami Satsangi. When I used to teach, she would look up at the trees to see if there was a python hanging, like the sword of Damocles, you know. Actually, when the tattwa shuddhi

seminar was going on, every day one python used to fall down. Those pythons are very beautiful and friendly. I put one on my shoulders; she was of course scared but sat down and we took a photograph also. They are harmless creatures, they are a part of nature, they are a member of the family. Of course, sometimes there is a rowdy member of the family. Well, you can ask Swami Satsangi about her mental problems, with emotions up and down, at that time when I was teaching her tattwa shuddhi. With eyes closed she used to listen to me, "Lam, vam, ram, python!"

In tantra there are four important places for sadhana. Please do not try them. One is in the cremation ground, where the bodies are cremated. If you go there in the night you will be shivering terribly out of fear, especially if there is a jackal going, "Ooooooooo!", or if there is a ferocious dog. Second place, in front of a young and beautiful girl. Sit down next to her, concentrate and don't break your meditation. Of course she should also practise. Otherwise, you are a yogi, you have no problems, but she is going to have problems. She will become hysterical, she will beat her husband or her child or somebody. The third place is a wild forest, where no man is visible. You can expect a scorpion, a rattlesnake, a tiger, or any one of your family. It can devour you or maybe stand quite close to you and say, "What a funny man, he is not moving at all." The fourth place is a solitary temple or church. Swami Satsangi had the choice of the third place.

I do not know how far she has overcome her fear about the members of her own family, but definitely she is an outstanding and exclusive yoga teacher in tattwa shuddhi. She will give you lessons in three stages. First she will explain, then she will lead you in the practice, then if you have any difficulties in understanding the explanation she will answer your questions. It will be very necessary for you to read the book Tattwa Shuddhi.

I hope that all of you have not minded my sarcastic remarks. I don't intend to withdraw my remarks and I hope they will mend many of your philosophical distractions. I don't mind if my disciples drink, or even if they are promiscuous. I don't care. Even if they drink poison, I don't mind, but I would prefer that they don't do it. In spite of all this, I will have the same relationship with them; no change in my relationships with you. A mother does not change her relationship with her children despite their idiosyncrasies, but she does expect that they are not idiots.

—Discourse at Satyanandashram, Paiania, 4 July 1985



Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

We have divided humanity into many fragments. We should try to stop this. Humanity is one. I am not different from you and you are not different from me because the growth of nature is evolution. Nature has

made all human beings with one universal law. Whether you are in Greece or India, Russia or in America, the law operating on all human beings is the same. The process of birth is the same, the systems of digestion, etc. are the same. Therefore, we must try to improve this crisis of humanity. When you render help to people, you render help to human beings, not because he is Greek or Indian, but because he is a human being. And today, the human being needs help. Modern education has not taught him

unity. We see today that every country, every nation is torn into fragments. You don't feel one with even the person staying in the next flat. There is so much fear in our minds about other people. We always feel that the other person might be a thief or a robber, or a bad man. Therefore, the science of meditation and the science of karma yoga must be taught to as many people as possible.

Q. What is the importance of karma yoga and obedience in ashram life?

Paramahansaji: Karma yoga helps you and helps others. Everybody is working for himself, and when you work for yourself, you expect some results. When those results are obtained you are happy and when the results are negative you are unhappy. Therefore, the karma which you do, the work which you do in your day-to-day life, causes happiness and unhappiness. However, when you are not working for yourself but for others, the results do not affect you. Through karma yoga you will learn how to work without being affected by the positive and the negative results. Many problems that we face are due to excessive thinking about our own mental condition. You have too much time to think about yourself. You have too much time to brood over your mental and emotional condition. You have too much time to imagine. As a result of this, neurosis becomes deeper and deeper. In modern psychology, there are two kinds of mental conditions. They are known as neurosis and psychosis, and both are equally bad. They are two different grades of schizophrenia. We are neurotic. "I feel bad", this is neurosis. "I am so angry", "Oh, my mind always thinks of bad things", "I am a sensitive person", "Oh no, my mind is jumpy." This is called neurosis. It goes deeper and deeper, and then it becomes psychosis. Then you are sitting alone and talking to yourself. You are doing things which you have



no control over. How to overcome this? Through karma yoga, because karma yoga keeps your mind tied down to different elements of work. If you work in the kitchen and if you have your own thoughts, then you will forget that you have put salt in the sauce, or put sugar once, twice, three times. It is said in the Bhagavad Gita that the mind is always active. There is not even one second in life when the mind is not active. This mental action is called karma. You have heard the word 'karma' often. Physical action is not karma, mental action is karma. This mental action becomes the basis of your personality. Physical action doesn't deform your personality. If you are a farmer or a carpenter or a stonebreaker or a sealer, it will never distort your karma or your personality. But when you keep on thinking, this will distort your personality. Therefore, in karma yoga, there is a balancing process between mental life and physical life. When this relationship between physical life and mental life is not balanced, that is called an abnormal personality.

There are four types of yoga. Of course there are many types of yoga, karma yoga, raja yoga, jnana yoga, nada yoga, kriya yoga, and so on, but there are four main branches. These four yogas are organized according to the nature of human temperament. Man's personality is a combination of four elements. Man is rational, but he is not only rational, he is also psychic. He is not only psychic, he is also emotional. He is not only emotional, psychic or rational, he is dynamic. We are a combination of dynamic, emotional, psychic and rational personality. Even hard intellectuals are psychic. One of the great scientists in France was Pascal. One night he suddenly saw a great fire in front of him. For two hours he saw this fire in front of him. It was his psychic vision. He was an intellectual, yet he had a psychic vision of a fire for two hours. At the same time there are psychics who are intellectuals.

Therefore, our sadhana must be a combination suitable to our personality. For dynamism, karma yoga; for emotion, bhakti yoga; for psychic development, raja yoga; and for rationalism and intellect, jnana yoga. Which of the yogas becomes your main practice depends on what the predominant element in your personality is, as none of these four elements are in equal proportion.

You are either predominantly dynamic, or emotional, or rational, or psychic. According to the predominance of your temperament, that particular yoga becomes your chief, or main yoga. In ashram life, karma yoga is the most important, extremely important, more than any other yoga. Outside of the ashram, other types of yoga should be practised more than karma yoga. That is precisely the



purpose of ashram life. If you want to study more about karma yoga, the Bhagavad Gita has said a lot about it. Swami Vivekananda and Swami Sivananda have written independent books on karma yoga.

Q. I cannot get rid of my desires and my fears. As an individual I am undisciplined and reactionary. Karma yoga does not help me, what should I do?

Paramahamsaji: Fear, and other mental problems are deeply ingrained in man and human culture. Religion and

society are also responsible for the quantum of our fears and desires. Our society today, especially in the West, has become very complicated. There are many things that you do not need but you desire. There are many situations which you are not at all related to, but you are afraid of. Therefore, sometimes karma yoga cannot help you because social, economic and political situations also influence the personality of the person. Therefore, in India, we have been fighting and resisting the new type of society and the new type of political and economic conditions.



These fears and desires you talk about also have to be understood in relation to the grey matter. You can't say that fear and emotions are just psychological conditions. The grey matter is affected chemically and psychologically, therefore these symptoms come up. If there is an imbalance, or some fault with the adrenal gland system, you will have more fear or less fear. In the same way, imbalance in many other glands in the body can cause an excess of sexual desire. You should relate these psychological and emotional conditions with the physical nature and condition of the body, particularly the grey matter, and also the food. You cannot underestimate the importance of food in relation to your psychological behaviour.

There are certain types of food which cause slow metabolism and there are certain types of food that cause fast metabolism. Fast metabolism is expressed in the form of anger. We are talking to each other very well for some time, and suddenly I don't agree with your point and I lose my temper. Suddenly your brain has been affected by the process of hyper-metabolism, and you express violence, or passion, or fear. There are two types of animal which nature has created: herbivorous and carnivorous. The two have different sets of systems in the body. All carnivorous animals have sharp teeth, all herbivorous animals have flat teeth, thirty-three in number. Examination of their digestive secretions shows that the concentration is completely different. Carnivorous animals have a strong concentration of hydrochloric acid and bile. If you vomit your bile out into your hand, it will not burn. If a dog, a tiger, or a leopard vomits his bile on your hand, your skin will be burnt. The concentration of acids is completely different in each type. The behaviour of the gall bladder and the liver is also entirely different in the two. There is also a difference in the length of the intestines; herbivorous

animals have very long intestines. The length of the intestine of a goat is much larger than that of a tiger.

Man is basically and naturally herbivorous and not carnivorous. Of course there are times where he has to be carnivorous, but that is only for survival. That man is basically and naturally a carnivorous animal is not true, therefore unnatural food also creates an abnormal psychological and emotional condition. When you are angry, violent and passionate, it indicates hyper-metabolism. When you are slow in action, you are thinking, deciding and determining, analyzing and judging, it means slow metabolism. Therefore, it is no use fighting with your own self. Find out where you are wrong. Don't think, "I have fear, I have fear, I have fear." It will not help you. Try to analyze and examine the food you eat and the philosophy you believe in, or the religion you follow, or the prayers you make, and the family members you live with. If they are convenient and good, then continue. If by examination you find they are detrimental to your psychological condition, then renounce them.

Q. Please talk to us about correct behaviour. How should we speak? How should we act? And what does tantra say about this?

Paramahamsaji: It is not that easy. People are born with different emotions, therefore it is not possible to tell you what you should do and how you should speak. Many great men have tried to explain this issue. They have come to one certain point, "Talk nicely to everybody." When you talk to somebody, you must be sure that the other party likes what you are saying. That is the central point of all the teachings. However, it is very difficult to practise because from childhood, we are not taught these things. Our parents tell us to speak nicely, but when they talk to each other they don't talk nicely. So, the child is

seeing two different things. In practice, he sees that his mother and father are almost at the point of collision. The next time the father says, "My child, speak nicely", what happens? The child believes that he should speak nicely, but when the practice comes, he behaves exactly the same as his gurus. Therefore, it is a very important duty of the parents to live the life which they want their child to live. No amount of brainwashing will help a child.

For the last thousands of years, great men have been saying the truth. The central teaching of all religions is not to kill anyone. But nobody is doing it. You are killing

human beings, you are killing chickens and pigs and goats and cows. Why? Because our parents have not lived as examples. Many times in India, I meet young people, and they are very careful with their food and their manners because they have learnt it through their parents. The relationship between husband and wife is a very responsible relationship. I must make it very clear to you that it is not because of love and passion that you must come together. It is the modern teaching that "I love you, so we will live together." A man and a woman come together to live together in order to develop their





spiritual life. According to the law of the great universal nature, the complete circle is made when the positive and the negative forces combine. When the male and female combine, it creates a polarity. This polarity should not merely be interpreted in terms of sexual relationships. It is not merely embracing and kissing, it is not merely talking to each other in an amicable and sweet way, "Oh my darling" or "The apple of my eye." This combination of polarity has to be brought about in the form of unified thought. This unified thinking must be an inherent quality

between the husband and the wife. Merely the attraction of the body, merely being attracted by blue eyes, green eyes, brown eyes, by the structure of the body, this coming together will not help. We have to understand that man and woman coming together form the great aspect of nature. Only then can these things happen.

Q. I would like you to briefly explain ishta devata, its necessity and role in the life of a sadhaka. My problem is I cannot conceive God in any form. God is for me formless,

nameless, and He is found everywhere. You have given me a meditative symbol. Can I manage without an ishta devata? Is devotion for you enough?

Paramahansa ji: God is formless and nameless. It does not have a particular place where it lives. It is all-pervading reality. God could be understood as an omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent force. There should not be any other thought about God except this. However, God is not an isolated being, like you or me. He is closer to me than my own breath. He is closer to me than my own mind. He is not at all apart from me, He is closer to my 'I', the feeling of 'I'. But His glory or His experience, cannot be comprehended by this 'I' which is so limited. In order to experience what I have just said about God, you need to transform the quality of your mind. To see the microbe or the bacteria you have to have a microscope. In the same way, to experience the truth of God you must have a microscopic mind. The microscopic mind is developed through certain sadhana.

The first sadhana is concentration of the mind. The focus of the mind must be sharp. If the focus is dissipated, there is dissipated vision. In order to achieve concentration, you must have an object. According to yoga there are three different items for concentration. The first object of meditation is something which has three dimensions, it can be a statue. The second is the centres in your own body. The third is an idea. Thus, you can concentrate either on an idea, a centre in the body, or on a statue outside. Out of all these three, the first one, that is concentration on the statue, is considered to be the easiest. Those who have achieved a certain level of concentration, can directly concentrate on the centres of the body. There are very few people in this world who can concentrate only on one idea. If you concentrate on an idea, then the mind keeps on flowing and slips

away through the association of thought. Supposing you concentrate on bliss, how will you concentrate? You like to feel blissful, and gradually the mind will slip out to associated thoughts. For a simple man, for an ordinary man, it is not possible to hold the mind on one particular thought. For a large number of people, concentration on a symbol which has three dimensions is easier because human eyes and the human mind is used to three dimensions. Even as you climb a house with the help of the staircase, in the same way, through this particular symbol you try to achieve concentration. Therefore, your ishta devata can be anyone. He can be your guru. Transcend the lower categories of the mind. No problem, even guru can be your ishta devata.

How did man begin thinking? Three million years ago or two million years ago, how did man suddenly begin thinking that he is? He was like an ape, as Darwin says or scientists say. He was living just like any animal, hunting, eating, fighting, sleeping. The sun rose and set every day but he didn't know it, the monsoons came and went, the weather changed, but he never cared. His nearest and dearest died, but only when he began shaking their hand did he find that they were not moving, he did not know what it was. When and how did man relate himself to time, space and object? This is of the greatest importance for man's evolution. I know I am. I know that I know I am. I know that I know that I know I am. Which monkey can do this? Which elephant and which cobra can do this? Man can do this. When did this happen and how did it happen? How can you explain this missing link? Darwin has not been able to give adequate answers to this. Nobody has been able to give an adequate answer.

There is a book in India. It tells about this. It says that the ancient man was sitting. He was not aware of time, space and object. Suddenly, in front of him an oval-shaped



Shivalingam came up. Do you know what a Shivalingam is? A Shivalingam is a very important aspect of ashram life. Lingam means symbol, Shiva means supreme being. Shivalingam means the symbol of the supreme being. It is an oval-shaped stone like a monolith. In some places it is small, in some places it is big, and in some places it is very big. It is said that twelve Shivalingams arose on earth at the same time, or maybe one a little later than the other. When this man who was one with nature saw that stone, which was shining and full of effulgence, he was amazed and dazed. Suddenly, he began to think, "Who am I?"

Exactly this story is played in the film 2001 Space Odyssey. The director has taken exactly the same idea from Shiva Purana, a thick book which tells the story of Shiva. It has thousands and thousands of verses in Sanskrit. It talks about Shiva and Shakti, the forces in human form, in feminine form, in male form. That oval shaped-stone is known as Shivalingam, which is made up of different mineral compositions. Some of them are made up of a crystal base. You know crystal? The essence of a rock is called crystal. The oldest rocks in nature produce crystal as an embryo. When man confronted this lingam, he began



to think “Who am I?” He put a question to the lingam, “Who are you?” Because with the knowledge of ‘I’, the knowledge of ‘you’ and ‘me’ begins.

Therefore, ishta devata is more important than God. Don’t confuse these two things at all. God definitely has no form. And what right have you to say what God is? You talk about Gorbajo, the Kolai and Gromiko, but you have never seen them. You see, man is so egoistic, he does not know the geography of his own country, and he begins to describe heaven and hell. He does not know about his own prime minister and president, and he begins to describe or explain God in books. It is better to be silent about God. God is not a symbol of an organization or a

group. God is my personal friend. My God has nothing to do with your God. He is my beloved, he is my friend, he is myself. My God does not belong to any church, I don’t care for the God of the church. My husband is my husband, my wife is my wife and not your wife, your husband is your husband, your wife is your wife, not mine. God has to be your personal property and your views about God must be silent. Your emotions about God should be private. You can’t shout at the top of your voice from the mosque. That is why God has become a political slogan. If we are not careful, this will happen more and more. In the past, millions have been killed in the name of God. If we continue talking about God in the same way, half the world will be finished. Do not confuse ishta devata with God. You concentrate on Shivalingam, it is absolutely okay. You concentrate on a chakra or a yantra, it is okay. And if you can and you are capable, don’t concentrate on any of these things, just concentrate on a thought.

I remember one of the incidents from the life of Einstein. He was invited by his friend to a dinner and he promptly arrived at his place, in the evening at about 9 o’clock. In the meantime, one of the nearest relatives of the host had a serious accident somewhere else. So, he left in order to attend to this accident and gave a note to his personal servant which was to be given to his guest. Now, Einstein arrived at the house of his host, went to the drawing room and sat down. The servant brought the letter and delivered it to him and it said, “I’m sorry, an accident has taken place, I am going, I will not be able to be at the dinner.” Einstein took the paper, kept it on the table and sat down on the sofa for three-quarters of the night. In the morning hours, the host arrived, and found Einstein on the sofa. He told him all about the accident. But Einstein did not know that he had been there all night because he had a mathematical problem

on his mind and he was so engrossed in solving the problem that he didn’t know if it was nine o’clock, ten o’clock, one o’clock, or two o’clock. Einstein later defined his theory of relativity on this basis. Many times people would ask him to explain the theory of relativity in non-technical, non-scientific terms. He would say, “It is a very cold night, and you are sitting with a very beautiful girl and you are a strong boy. You will not even know that it is cold and that you had been with her the whole night. If you are alone and shivering and cold, you are so unhappy that every hour is like five hours.” If you have this kind of a mind, then you can concentrate on a thought. You just close the eyes and say, “Who am I, the body or the senses or the mind or the idea, or speech or thought?” You can spend the whole night like Einstein. A few such people have been born on this earth.

There are millions of ways to concentrate; you can concentrate on the sound of music. The music must start very slowly and gradually increase in momentum in the brain area, so much so that the brain waves must turn from theta, beta and delta to alpha waves. You can concentrate on a tiny little star in the sky and isolate it by removing the other stars. You can sit down by the seaside, and concentrate on the rough sea with the waves coming and going, coming and going, or the blue and green expanse of the ocean. You should never put a question like there is God or not. If you asked me honestly, I can tell you that anything that you concentrate on is God, because logically there is nothing else in this universe except Him. This universe is not a combination of duality. This creation is not a combination of God and something else. No, we can’t accept a duality, because if there is duality there is multiplicity. Then there is one force for God and another force for no-God. How can you accept two forces existing simultaneously? You must have one thing clear that there

is God and nothing else but God. Then you should not say God and creation; creation is another form of God. It is a modification. The universe is an extension, a manifestation or transformation; the universe is not creation. A potter and a pot are different, but God and His creation are not different. If you consider God and His creation different, then there will be many logical and philosophical problems which we cannot solve. This is where most religions are illogical. Most religions are illogical because they talk about God and creation as two different things. That is why they have problems with modern science. Modern science has come to the point where the whole universe is one; where the mass and energy is unalterable. The total mass of the universe and the total quantum energy of the universe does not become more or does not become less, and this universe is always expanding. There are millions and millions of suns, stars, galaxies and planetary systems. In a tiny atom, they have seen the whole universal pattern; the intra-molecular space in an atom is proportionately exactly the same distance between the earth and the sun.

The movement of the planets and the solar system, the behaviour of the solar system and the behaviour of the molecules in an atom is the same, there is no difference. Therefore, ishta devata can be anyone, I can be ishta devata. If your mother or your father is a saint, he and she can be your ishta devata. What's more, you yourself can be your ishta devata. That is what Sufis in Iran used to do. They would put a mirror in front of them and put a red or black mark there and concentrate on themselves. When we are talking about concentration, we must talk about concentration and not bring God into it. If you want to bring God into it, do it with logic and do it scientifically. Bring your God, not a God from a religion because God has no religion. Or maybe all religions are his religions.

—Satsang at Satyanandashram, Paiania, 6 July 1985



Group photo with Swami Satsangi and disciples and devotees from Italy

Satsang

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. Every time a spiritual experience takes place, various difficulties arise. There is self-satisfaction that leads to inertia and complacency, the thirst lessens and the sadhana becomes shallow. A feeling of death, pain and loss follows. After a while the cycle starts again. How can one avoid this see-saw? I feel desperate about it because the ego gets smarter and smarter in the spiritual game and it gets increasingly difficult to remain pure-hearted and sincere in my quest. Is there a way to keep the thirst of experience steadily growing so that we don't pull our heart away every time we get near the divine power?

Paramahamsaji: This is a good question. And if you listen to the answer carefully you will be disappointed. Every experience is not a spiritual experience. Your mind alters and has certain experiences. You call them spiritual experiences. But they are not spiritual experiences; they are experiences of the altered states of mind. The mind can alter due to various reasons; it can alter due to an imbalance in the hormonal system in the body; it can alter if induced by hallucinogenic drugs; it can alter due to sudden depression in the nervous system; it can alter due to too much suffering; it can alter due to fear and insecurity; it can alter due to too much suppression of sexual instinct. There are hundreds of ways by which the mind can alter and these experiences are not objective experiences as you have through your senses. Sensual experience is that experience which you have through your ears, nose, eyes and hands. Sometimes, due to the reasons I've already told you, the association of the contact between the brain and the senses is cut off. Sometimes it is not cut off, but the

sensual communication in the brain is very feeble. Then you have many kinds of visions and you are very happy or you are very afraid. You think that they are great. No, they are not great. They belong to this world. They very much belong to this world and they are not divine.

Human consciousness is broadly classified into three parts. Psychologists call them conscious, subconscious and unconscious. In yoga it is classified into five domains. It is called the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic

and the unconscious. Therefore, the experiences can arise due to different reasons in the body, or they can arise out of certain changes in the pranas, or they can arise out of the altered states of mind. All these causes belong to this world. Actually, experiences must be counted when they become psychic, and psychic experiences are not pleasing. They are frightening. After you have them, you are not happy because they are not a part of this conscious mind. They arise from the subconscious level of your mind. All



your suppressions, all your complexes come out in the form of depression; you see snakes chasing you, or you see hideous figures, or that you are falling from a mountain, or that thousands of barbarians are coming to finish you off, or that you are in the midst of your own dung, or you see rotten flesh all around you, you see dead bodies, and you see death. People go crazy and they stop the practice. This

is the beginning of a higher experience. This is actually not the spiritual experience, but the beginning of the super-physical experience. When you are having an experience, you are frightened, and during the experience you shout and cry. Modern psychologists have named it the weeping consciousness. Psychologists have tried to explain why people weep in dreams. Sometimes, in deep meditation

you begin to howl like a jackal and sometimes like a peacock, or you begin to cry. So psychologists have tried to explain this subconscious state of mind, this mental experience, as weeping consciousness, or as howling consciousness. There are so many names.

Now, Hindus have a god called Rudra and he is an aspect of Shiva. When Shiva begins to cry, he is known





as Rudra. Shiva represents higher consciousness and Rudra, the weeping Shiva, represents one of his aspects and is frightening. Somehow, if you are able to face these experiences for a period of time, and if you don't go crazy by then, there is another difficult domain that you have to pass. That is the domain of total unconscious. I call it the sleeping man. You know what the sleeping man is? I don't know if you have ever seen a picture which Hindus worship. If not, try to get one. There is a large ocean of milk, in that there is a big serpent, and in the lap of the serpent is a man, a beautiful man who is sleeping. He is the most beautiful person. He has a human body and he is in absolute sleep. And there is a beautiful lady, a most beautiful lady. She is washing his feet. That is the sleeping man. That is the symbol of the unconscious. What is this unconscious? It is not a dead consciousness; it is the potential consciousness which is dormant just like dynamite. Everything is potential. You can keep it in your pocket, you can keep it in your bag, but once it explodes, you know what it is? Just as dynamite has two stages, the explosive state and the dormant potential, in the same way you have an unconscious body. Just like the seed of a tree has potential; the tree is dormant in the seed, and the seed is the unconscious body of the tree. Everyone has an unconscious body. It is not a dead body. When you enter into that unconscious body in meditation, such experiences take place that you don't want them again. At the time of these experiences, you are afraid of death. Fear of death comes in with absolute clarity. You may be afraid of death, but you have never experienced death, you don't know what it is, but I know what it is. In the Bible also it is written, "By God, I swear I die every night."

Many times this experience comes, you feel that you will die, and you don't want to. You want to come out of this experience of death and you exert a lot; you make a lot

of effort to come out of that. Your body goes into spasms, the mouth and the face twitches, and the pupils of the eyes are concentrated on bhrumadhya. Anyone who is looking at you sees that you are contracting your body, you exert a lot of physical effort. The fear of death is so great, so real, so actual, that you know what death is. Then you shout, you shout out someone's name. Some shout the name of their God, some shout the name of their nearest and dearest one, and then you come out. After you come out, you don't want to have that experience any more. Yet it comes, not often. It can come once a year, once every three years, and with each of these experiences your life changes. The experiences of your body do not change your life, they are hypnotic events. Let me say it very clearly, without offending anyone, they are hypnotic experiences. Experiences rising out of the subconscious domain of the mind are effective. They make you more introspective, analytical and reflective within your own self. Others can see that change taking place in the life of that person, and he can also understand many transcendental things. However, when the experiences rise from the domain of the unconscious, then total change takes place. Not only change in one's personality and behaviour, but change in one's way of deciding things in life. Such people become the leaders and guides of humanity.

Therefore, instead of feeling happy or depressed about your experiences, find the way to have greater and deeper experiences. At the same time, find out how to face them. I can give you an example. Many years ago, when I used to visit Munger, I used to live in a particular place. At that time I was not the head of an ashram, I was just a traveller. I used to go to that place from time to time, and stay. There was a platform, about six metres by ten metres, and it was very rough. I used to lie down there and relax. I had two very vivid experiences there. I was lying down one

day and relaxing; I was almost half asleep and I heard a sound, as if some wall was cracking. I raised my head and saw that a little further away from me the platform had cracked into two pieces and a tall man with a white dress was coming out of it. He was coming from the ground floor to the upper floor. I heard in my mind, "This is a dream? Am I sleeping?" But I saw everything else around me and it was all intact, objectively. Then I looked at my own self, and then I saw that he was there. He came out, walked down and walked away. I did not dare to get up from my place. I have never believed in spirits. I have visited and lived in haunted houses, I have lived in cemeteries, I have lived in the graveyard, I have slept by a dead man, and I am not afraid. I don't believe even to this day. Then I thought, "Who is this man?" "Is it my imagination?" "Can imagination be so concentrated?" Maybe people who have seen UFOs have had the same experience. Maybe UFOs don't exist at all; it is a combination of concentrated experience.

I got up after he had left. I went and saw the crack and underneath the crack, I saw a grave about a metre and a half below the upper surface of the platform. Then I left. I went back the next day. All was okay. This is what we call experience. When the waking and meditation become one, when you are inside and outside both at the same time. Now you are only outside; in meditation you are only inside. These two experiences occur at the same time when you are inside your own self and outside in this material world.

Many years later, I established a small ashram in Munger. I bought the very same property on which the platform existed, but I did not remember the experience I had had. I wanted to raise a big hall like this on that same platform for yoga classes. When the labourers were digging on the platform, they came across the tomb. This

is called an experience. Now, this is not a frightening one, it's an experience which confuses the external self and the internal self with each other. Where does external consciousness end and where does internal consciousness begin, we don't know. Definitely, I saw the crack and definitely I was not dreaming or sleeping, yet definitely the crack was not there. It was not a hallucination because the tomb was there, which I found out only after ten years.

In the same place, on another occasion, I had another experience. When I was lying down there and relaxing, I suddenly found that I was rising up above the floor. I had a clear feeling that I was ten or fifteen metres above the floor. I looked down, it was frightening, because when you are at a greater distance, the brain, the focus of the eyes and the distance don't match with each other. Many people get vertigo. Suddenly I found that I was thrown down and this caused me perspiration and palpitation of the heart. I did not want to go to that place again because I could not believe that it was an experience. I believed that it was an incident. You understand the difference between incident and experience? An experience is a subjective event and an incident is an objective happening. I thought it was an incident, somebody took me up and put me down. Maybe the next time I would hurt my head, my spinal chord, my brain, no, I didn't want it. When I returned to Munger the next time I thought, no, it was an experience, not an incident. By that time a few months had passed and the fear had gone out of my mind, so I went there and relaxed myself. I had the same experience again. After that I did not go to that place. Now, this is called experience which seems to be an incident. The first one was also an experience, but which appeared to be an incident. How then can we prepare ourselves for experiences? It is not important to have an experience now, because if you have experiences, they will be low quality experiences. If

you want to have different experiences and high quality experiences, then you will have to prepare yourself. In this particular respect, we emphasize discipline of body, mind and emotions. You must have so much control over your mind that whenever you give an order to your mind, it must obey. Supposing, I smoke fifty cigarettes a day. Every time I smoke, I feel sorry about myself and I don't want to smoke, but still I do. I don't want it because I know it is bad for the lungs, it is not good for meditation, and it can also cause me cancer. But still, I do it. What does it mean? The mind is weak.

Supposing I drink too much, I fight with my children, my wife and my family members, and I am not pleasant with my friends; it drains my economic resources, and I feel very bad in the morning the next day. I promise myself, "You are not going to drink tomorrow." I promise before my children, before my wife, maybe even before my guru, but I do it. What does it mean? It means you are a person with good intentions but with a weak mind. Good intentions will not do in spiritual life, you must have a strong mind. Whatever you want to do, you should do it, good or bad. Some people are really cruel, they are murderers, but once they decide, they do it; they will not change the course of their mental life. If I give up smoking, I may have constipation, I may often have spells of depression, I may feel completely bored, but no, I am not going to do it.

Similarly, you must try yourself with every addiction in life. I have just given you the example of smoking and drinking. There are many other addictions of life which you do not want to get into, but you do get into. You consider it bad, you consider it a sin, you consider it evil, but still you do it. This particular position must be cured first in spiritual life. You may fail, it doesn't matter, but a time should come when you do not fail a hundred

percent. You may fail in the beginning, ninety-nine times, but you should keep on accelerating your willpower, and you will ultimately succeed, 99.5 percent. All great men are born with this method. Opportunities do not make one a great man. Opportunities do not take you through history. Opportunities did not make one Christ, opportunities did not make one Moses, opportunities did not make one Gandhi. It is this mental power which makes one Gandhi, or a Moses, or a Christ. Thousands and thousands of people are born before you in history. Some have been military expeditionists, some have been great philosophers and saints, some have been great tyrants. But they all had a strong mental power. With that strong mental power, when they go into unconsciousness, they come out with some knowledge. They come out from Mount Sinai with that piece of stone, the Commandments. That unconsciousness is a reservoir of great knowledge, information and wisdom. It has past, present and future chronicles. However, everybody cannot go there. With this weak mind, you cannot go there.

Our minds are weak. We are suffering from infirmity of willpower. This is the first sickness in spiritual life, in yoga, which you will have to cure. Asana and pranayama will help you; yoga nidra and meditation will help you. But the greatest help you will receive is from your own resolve. Start a resolve today, with a small point. Supposing you smoke, and you want to give it up, supposing you drink, and you want to give it up, something like that. Make a very small resolve before asana, pranayama, meditation, mantra, "I will not smoke." Practise it for three months. After three months, add another resolve. "When I go to church, or to my guru, or to the ashram, I will not smoke." That is step two. In India, there are certain days in the year when non-vegetarians will also not take non-vegetarian food. This is called discipline. When people come to the

ashram, or come to see me that day, they do not eat meat, eggs, fish, or drink and smoke. You have to attack the infirmity of your mental power very gradually. Once you discipline your mind, the experiences come.

—Satsang at Satyanandashram, Paiania, during Tattwa Shuddhi seminar, 7 July 1985

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Impressions

The Sociable Man

Swami Sivamurti reflects upon Swami Satyananda during his Greek visit.

Swami Satyananda was notably tolerant to all kinds of people. He enjoyed the company of all types of people. They were not necessarily dedicated to a spiritual path. He was also always gentle with women and always put them in a position of respect.

I recall a time in Paiania during one of his visits to Greece, when he was in the ashram and was having early morning appointments. One man came to see him. He was an alcoholic. He was trembling. He brought his brandy flask with him to have a little nip to give him some confidence to speak to Swami Satyananda. When we went in, Swami Satyananda was sitting there alone and the visitor produced his brandy flask and said, "I've brought my brandy here, to have a tot just before I start." Swami Satyananda immediately put him at ease by saying, "Oh, brandy! I enjoy a tot myself in the mornings. We can have one together." The man was so overwhelmed, his fear, his feelings of inferiority, his feelings of being wretched, and not accepted for what he was, immediately vanished, and he shone in Swami Satyananda's presence. He shone so much that he completely forgot about having a little bit to drink, and he put his flask back in his pocket, forgetting even to offer some to Swami Satyananda, who had said he'd share the drink with him. He put the flask back in his pocket, and spoke to Swami Satyananda about

his problems. And Swami Satyananda comforted him. He didn't tell him not to drink; to give up drinking, for that would have been impossible for the man. But he spoke to him about the importance of self-respect, the importance of our true identity which lies beyond the mind, beyond the imperfections, beyond our limitations and our weaknesses. He spoke to him in such a way so as to remove his fear and guilt and take away his pain. After half an hour that man left the interview a new person, with renewed confidence in himself, new respect in himself and new feelings of his own individual worth.

Just a glance – enough to touch my heart

Sannyasi Atmaratna offers homage to Swami Satyananda.

In my efforts to become a disciple I made many mistakes. I stumbled and fell many times, countless. But Swami Satyananda and Swami Sivamurti never once rejected me. They forgave me. Their divine understanding has been their greatest gift to me. Words cannot describe my gratitude. The love offered to me has filled my soul and my life. Beauty abounds. The world has become a place where divine will applies every minute. It is to Swami Satyananda and those who represent him that I owe everything I believe in. Thank you. Thank you my God wherever you are. Thank you.

Keeping a promise

Sannyasi Nada Shakti, one of the pillars of Satyananda Yoga in Thessaloniki, recalls the impact of meeting Swami Satyananda.

Back in the 1980s, yoga was something very new for people living in my hometown, Thessaloniki. Swami Sivamurti, who had already established yoga centres in Athens and Kalamata, used to come to our city once a month and give lectures and yoga classes at Nepheli Hotel. We were a small group of ten to fifteen people who urged her to open a yoga centre in our city as well. Her answer was, "When the disciple is ready, the master appears." Soon after that our first yoga centre was inaugurated in a small one-storey house and Swami Bhajananda was appointed to be in charge of this centre.

Swami Satyananda visited Greece several times in the eighties and travelled extensively throughout the country giving lectures and satsangs and, later on, initiations into poorna and karma sannyasa. I cannot recall any particular incident from those days, but I remember that from the very first time that I heard him speak, his words had such power and truth that they went straight into my heart and touched me on a deeper level of which I was not aware until that time. As I was already married and had two small children I was overjoyed when in 1984 I learned that there was a spiritual path for householders who wished to use their lives for a higher purpose and utilize everything in life for their own growth as well as for the growth of the people surrounding them. Thus, the following year in 1985, I was initiated into karma sannyasa by Swami Satyananda at the newly-founded Ashram in Paiania and accepted him as my guru for guidance and inspiration. The only thing he asked from his disciples was the promise to take one step forward every day.

This was only the beginning. During the twenty-five years that followed, Paramahamsaji had an immense influence on my life because he gave me a philosophy

with which to live. I believed him when he taught us that all the hardships, all the difficulties and obstacles in life were there in order to give us inner strength and purpose. I believed him when he said that everything in life happens for our good and our evolution, and that if we accept pleasant things in life we must also learn to accept the things that make us suffer and do so with higher awareness.

It is well known that Swami Satyananda did not teach us with words alone. Mostly, he taught us by example. When he said, "Renounce everything and at the end renounce renunciation", it was not very clear to some of us what he really meant by that. On 8th August 1988, right after Guru Poornima, when thousands of disciples from all over the world had gathered around him for the celebrations in the new beautiful Ganga Darshan building, he left the ashram as a mendicant with only a few rupees in his pocket. This came as a great surprise to many, but it was so much like Swami Satyananda. He had indeed renounced renunciation and went out to live with self-imposed hardships and poverty, advice he often repeated to his disciples when he said, "A sannyasin should live on self-imposed poverty."

During my last visit to India in 2006 for the eleventh Sat Chandi Mahayajna, we were blessed with Swami Satyananda's presence in most of the celebrations. I noted down meticulously most of the wonderful things he spoke to us about. There is one phrase that I have retained in the most inner part of my heart, "Unless you can bring joy to everybody, you are a farce."

Guruji left us his spiritual children, an eternal legacy. It is now more important than ever before to act upon his teachings of love and service to our fellow man.

"Take care of another person's needs and your needs will be taken care of" is the essence of his teachings for me. If we really want to honour his memory, we must continue to abide by his teachings, and to support his mission now more than ever before.

The greatest blessing I have had in life was my initiation into karma sannyasa by Paramahansa Satyananda and the greatest gift I could wish for others is that they would be so fortunate as to meet such a great master. I am deeply grateful to Swami Satyananda because I believe that he kept his promise to connect me with my inner guru. Although I grieve at the thought that I shall not see him again in his human form, I am confident that Swami Satyananda will live in us forever even beyond this life.

Chronicles

Swami Satyananda inaugurated the Paiania ashram and held Guru Poornima celebrations for the second consecutive year in Greece. Devotees attended from all over the world and were inspired by Swami Satyananda's discourses on the sublime heights of the guru-disciple relationship. Following on from this, Swami Satyananda presided over a three-day seminar on tattwa shuddhi and kriya yoga taught by Swami Satsangi and Swami Sivamurti. Swami Satyananda then travelled to Belgium accompanied by Swami Satsangi and Swami Sivamurti.



Greek Knowers of Truth: Epictetus

Epictetus (55-135 CE) was a Stoic philosopher. He was born a slave at Hierapolis (in present-day Turkey). He lived in Rome until banished, and then lived in Nicopolis, North-West Greece. His teachings were noted down by his pupil Arrian. He taught that philosophy is not just a theoretical discipline, but a way to live. All external events are determined by fate and out of our control, but we can accept whatever happens with dispassion and equanimity. We are responsible for our own actions that can be examined and controlled through self-discipline. Suffering arises when we strive to control what is uncontrollable, or neglect what is in our power to change. Our duty is to care for others and this leads to happiness.

Swami Satyananda on karma

Karma is the chain of actions created by man in his life. Or, in other words, it is the effects of all the activities in life. Karmas are threefold. There are those that we are performing now, those that we have already performed, and those that have been manifesting in the form of

destiny. The karma which we are performing at the moment can always be changed by our willpower. The karma which we have already performed can be harmonized if we lead a spiritual life. But the karma which has taken the form of destiny cannot be revoked; we have to undergo it.

Swami Satyananda on discipline

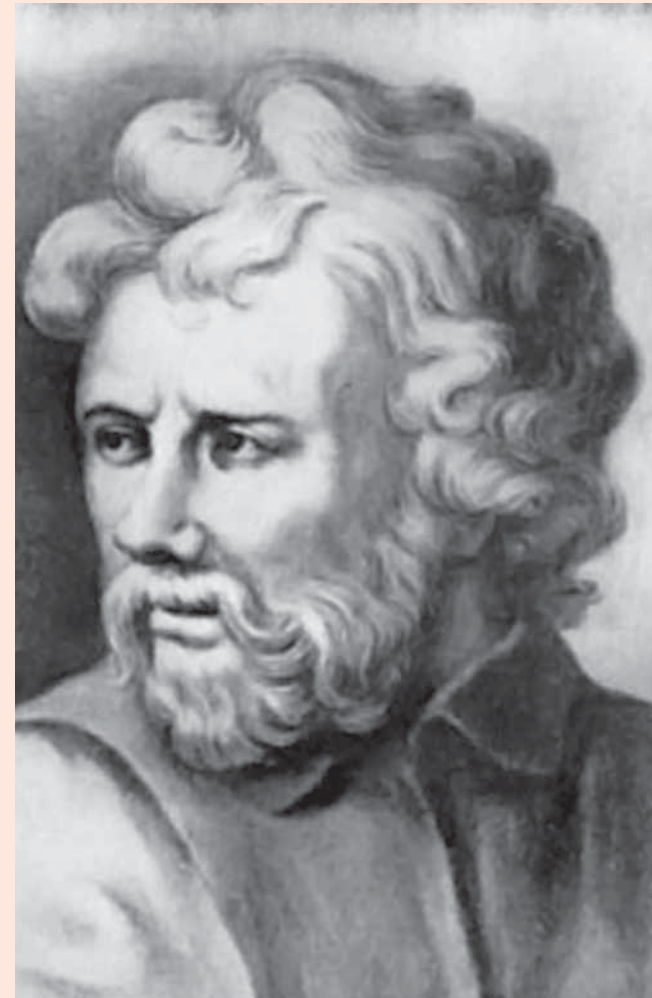
Yoga is, in my opinion, the only science of individual discipline. It is what we call voluntary discipline, and there is no doubt that voluntary discipline is by all means superior to other forms of discipline, such as political discipline, military discipline, religious discipline and police discipline. A nation becomes great through individual discipline.

Yoga is primarily a science of disciplining the body, mind, emotion and intellect.

Sayings of Epictetus

Do not seek to have events happen as you want them to, but instead want them to happen as they do happen and your life will go well.

It is not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.

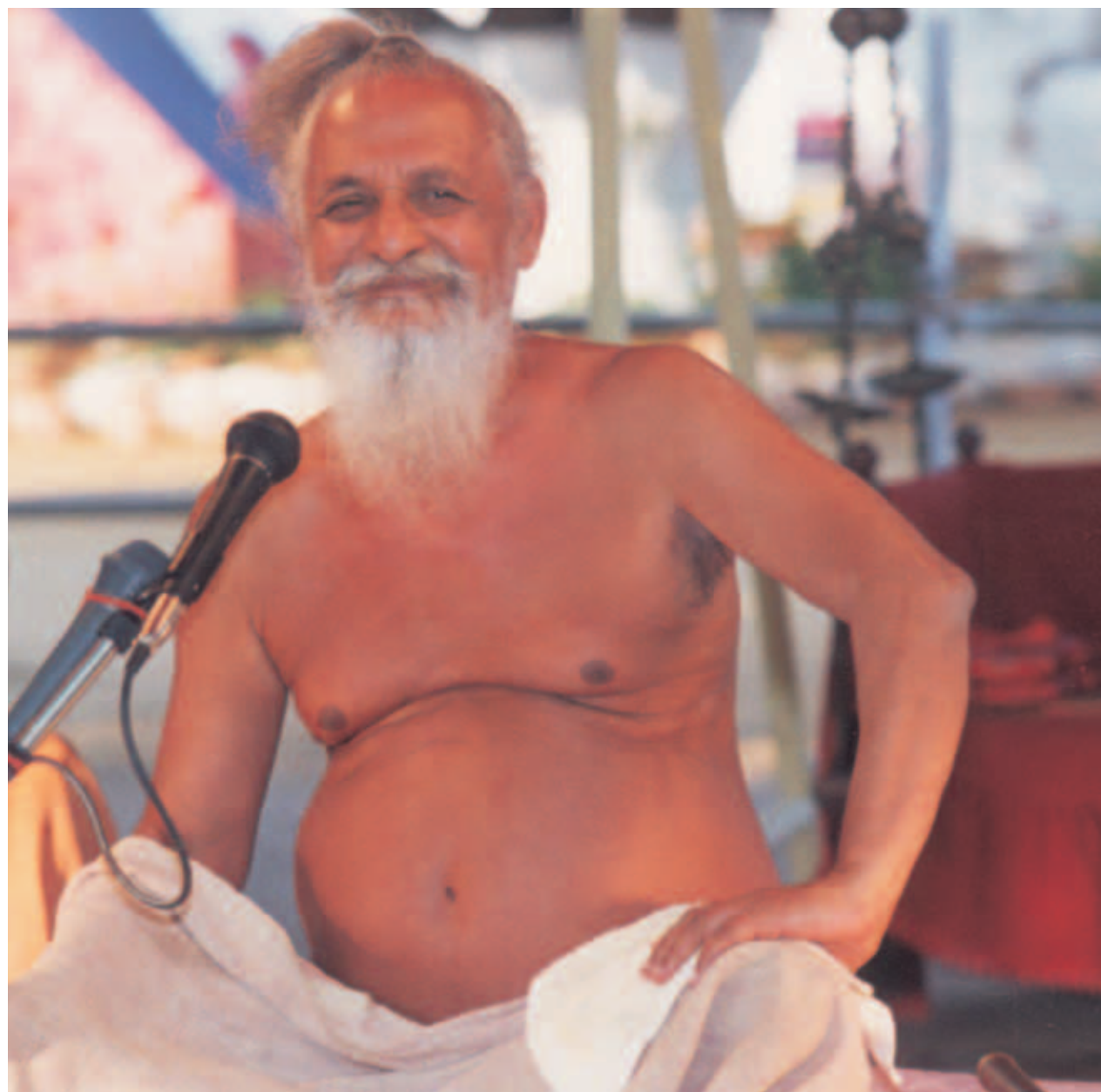




Visits to Rikhiapeeth

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Rikhiā: in the Presence of Swami Satyananda Saraswatī

Since the establishment of Satyananda Yoga in Greece, regular visits have been made to India by devotees wishing to strengthen their connection with the source. This chapter is an overview of these visits.

On 29th July 1988, twenty-seven Greek devotees attended the last Guru Poornima in Paramahamsaji's presence held at the Bihar School of Yoga, Munger. Shortly thereafter, on 8th August, he left Munger. At the height of his accomplishments, Paramahamsaji decided his future vision was to be a more universal one.

Paramahamsaji began his pilgrimage through the siddha teerthas, spiritual centres, of India as a mendicant in the tradition of kshetra sannyasa. On 8th September 1989, the birthday of his guru, Swami Sivananda, he had a vision of his ishta devata, Lord Mrityunjaya, and heard the clear instructions, "Go to my cremation ground, the chitabhoomi." The cremation ground of Sati was at a small village called Rikhiā in the Deoghar district, Bihar. Swami Satyasangananda found the place at Rikhiā that Paramahamsaji had seen in his vision. A few weeks later, he arrived there and began a life of intense spiritual practice, entering the lifestyle of paramahamsa sannyasins, who do not work for a mission alone, but have a universal vision. He founded the Sri Panchdashnam Paramahamsa Alakh Bara in 1990, to further the work of his guru, and with the mandate to uphold and propagate the highest tradition of sannyasa, the tapovan style of living adopted by the rishis and munis of the vedic era.

He also commenced the panchagni vidya and other vedic sadhanas. Swami Niranjana spoke of the experience

of disciples visiting Paramahamsaji and witnessing him undertaking the panchagni vidya: "In 1990, the first year of commencing panchagni, Paramahamsaji gave thousands of disciples and devotees the once in a life time opportunity to have his darshan when he was giving the final ahuti, offering, to Agni devata. People flocked from all over the world to the Alakh Bara and had the rare glimpse of Paramahamsaji performing the austere sadhana, which they had never seen, but only read about in biographies of saints who had left their footprint in the sands of time."

During 1991, Paramahamsaji received a divine mandate, "Take care of your neighbours as I have taken care of you." So, he sought to balance the individual aspect of liberation with the social task of helping other people. The social and charitable institution of Sivananda Math, founded by Paramahamsaji in 1984 at Munger in memory of his guru, was developed and guided by Swami Satyasangananda at Rikhiā to uplift the underprivileged and neglected residents of the surrounding villages.



Last Guru Poornima with Swami Satyananda in Munger in 1988



Swami Satyananda in Munger

Visits of Greek Disciples and Devotees to Rikhia

1992: Twelve Greek devotees attended a course on swara yoga at BSY, Ganga Darshan, Munger. At Rikhia, Paramahamsaji had been undertaking the intensive panchagni sadhana. The group was invited to receive darshan with Paramahamsaji at the Alakh Bara, Rikhia.



Swami Satyananda in Rikhia



1993: The 50th year of Paramahamsaji's renunciation and dedication to sannyasa was honoured in November. This commemoration was celebrated at Ganga Darshan as the Tyag Golden Jubilee and 108 Greeks participated in the event and attended a laya yoga course conducted by Swami Niranjana. Following the Tyag Golden Jubilee celebrations, Swami Sivamurti and ten other swamis from Greece received Paramahamsaji's darshan at the Alakh Bara.

1994: Paramahamsaji gave special focus to bhakti yoga as the most important yogic path for the new millennium. The purpose of life is to realize God through love and service to others. This was the essence of his daily satsangs. Sixty disciples and devotees from Greece joined the six hundred people who came from all over the world for this special event with their guru.

1995: The first of what became the annual Sat Chandi Mahayajna was held this year. Thousands of people attended and Paramahamsaji conducted satsangs every morning. Swami Sivamurti took a group of Greek sannyasins and devotees to Rikhia. A distribution of prasada and darshan with Paramahamsaji, took place at the newly constructed Christ Kutir. During these celebrations, Paramahamsaji passed on his spiritual succession to

Swami Niranjana: "Today Swami Niranjana has received his initiation. The initiation is over. The Mother will be the witness and so will all of you. I am handing over to Swami Niranjana the two greatest assets in my tantric life, the crystal mala and the crystal lingam. And I feel assured that he will lead you through the encircling gloom. Whenever there is darkness in life, one forgets the way. He is the one who can tell you where to go and what to do."

1996: Rama Naam Aradhana was conducted at Rikhia. Thousands of devotees attended the event in December. Prasad was distributed to local villagers. Seventy devotees attended from Greece. Swami Sivamurti remembers Paramahamsaji saying at the celebrations that if there was ever to be a clash between the role of being a guru and being a sannyasin, he would choose the role of the sannyasin.

1997: Sat Chandi Mahayajna and Sita Kalyanam were celebrated together with a Christian mass conducted by Rev. Antoinette Schoenmaker of the Independent Church of Australia. Fifty-five people from Greece attended.



Group photos with Greek devotees and disciples 1996



Greeks dressed up for the wedding of Sita and Ram 1998

1998: On the final day of the Sat Chandi Mahayajna and Sita Kalyanam celebrations, when the wedding ceremony between Lord Rama and his wife Sita was re-enacted, Sannyasis Vedamurti and Durgashakti from Greece were married by pandits according to the vedic tradition. Among the many international disciples were forty-nine devotees from Greece. During the wedding, Paramahamsaji said, "Another auspicious Greek marriage is taking place here after 2,500 years. This is a very clear message to everyone that in India we meet for union. Whether it is union with a woman or a man, whether it is union with atma or purusha or Brahman, whether it is union with yoga or even union with Rama, India is the place of union." Acharyas, spiritual and religious leaders from different religions blessed the couple and the wedding.

1999: Rajasooya Yajna was conducted and on the last day, Sita Kalyanam, the symbolic marriage of Sita and Rama took place. Greek people joined the thousands from India and around the world who attended the festivities.

2000: Rajasooya Yajna, Sita Kalyanam and Sat Chandi Mahayajna were conducted at the Alakh Bara. A Greek Orthodox Christian liturgy of the Unction (to Mother Mary) was conducted by Father Vissarion from Greece. This ceremony served as a prelude to the worship of Devi. Paramahamsaji said, "We have no problems with religions. At least, I have no problems with religions because I can see them in the light of my own self. We will have a Mass here conducted by Father Vissarion of the Greek Orthodox Church. Sometimes, we have Protestant services, sometimes we have Catholic services. This time, we will have a Greek Orthodox Mass. We will sing songs together



Greek Swamis with Rev. Antoinette Schoenmaker, Australia 1998

and have Holy Communion. You should remember that politics has taken us away from other religions and has created distances. The distances which have been created between religions are not because of religion, they are because of politics. So, we will celebrate Christmas here on the 25th of December. People from Greece will make all the arrangements. The holy wine has also been brought from there. Everything will be done by Greece."

2001: Swami Sivamurti took a group of thirty-five Greek devotees to Rikhia to celebrate Guru Poornima. However, due to travel difficulties they were diverted to Munger and Guru Poornima was celebrated there. Swami Sivamurti and two swamis later received darshan of Paramahamsaji in Rikhia. In December, a group of fifty-five Greek devotees visited Paramahamsaji where he revealed that the yajna was part of a twelve-year cycle of the Rajasooya Yajna cycle which began in 1995. He stated, "I am performing the Rajasooya Yajna to re-establish peace of mind." Sat Chandi Mahayajna and Sita Kalyanam were also celebrated.

2002: A Greek group led by Swami Sivamurti attended the annual Rajasooya Yajna, Sat Chandi Mahayajna and Sita Kalyanam celebrations.



Father Visarion planting olive trees in Rikhia 2000

2003: Guru Poornima was celebrated at Rikhia and a Greek group of disciples attended. In November, the Rajasooya Yajna was held and the Sat Chandi Mahayajna was performed to invoke the blessings of Devi, the Cosmic Mother. The fruits of Paramahamsaji's sadhana were distributed in the form of peace, prosperity and happiness to all. The village of Rikhia was transformed, and the mandate of serve, love and give, resounded throughout the world. Forty-three devotees from Greece attended the Sita Kalyanam festivities.

2004: Guru Poornima was celebrated with a havan conducted by Swami Satyasangananda. Twenty-six devotees from Greece attended. Radha-Krishna Jhoolan was celebrated at Rikhiapeeth in August. Later in the year,



2003

the Rajasooya Yajna was conducted as well as the Sat Chandi Mahayajna and Sita Kalyanam. Prasad was distributed to around five thousand people from India and abroad. Forty-one devotees from Greece attended the festivities.

2005: Swami Satyananda gave darshan during Guru Poornima celebrations. In August, Swami Satyananda gave satsang during Sri Radha-Krishna Jhoolan Mahotsav at Rikhiapeeth. The Rajasooya Yajna and Sat Chandi Mahayajna and Sita Kalyanam were again conducted and thirty-five disciples from Greece attended. Paramahamsaji gave darshan and spoke on the significance of yajna.

2006: Swami Satyananda presided over the Guru Poornima celebration and gave darshan and satsang. Forty-eight Greeks attended. In November, a group of fifty-nine Greek devotees attended the celebrations of the Rajasooya Yajna, Sat Chandi Mahayajna and Sita Kalyanam.

2007: Swami Satyananda presided over the Guru Poornima celebrations and gave darshan and satsang,



2004



2005

forty-three Greeks attended. The final Rajasooya yajna was held at Rikhia with over twenty thousand people from forty-five countries attending. Fifty-three devotees from Greece were among them. Paramahamsaji announced the formation of Rikhiapeeth, "Swami Satsangi is the Peethadhishwari of Rikhiapeeth and has been given the sankalpa of Swami Sivananda's three cardinal instructions: Serve, Love, Give. They will be practised and lived here. This is the future vision of Rikhiapeeth."



2006

2008: Devotees from Greece attended Guru Poornima and received Paramahamsaji's darshan. Paramahamsaji introduced the Mahamrityunjaya Yajna, which is an important and effective yajna for the health, wellbeing and protection of humanity. The yajna coincided with the birth of Paramahamsaji, which took place at Almora, in the foothills of the Himalayas on 24th December 1923. Yoga Poornima is now a day to pay tribute to the birth and life of Paramahamsaji. During the celebrations, participants were blessed with his constant darshan. Paramahamsaji was present at every session of the events. Forty-devotees from Greece attended the festivities.

2009: Twenty-one devotees from Greece attended the Guru Poornima celebrations and received Paramahamsaji's darshan. In November, the fourteenth Sat Chandi Mahayajna was conducted together with the Yoga Poornima celebrations, at Rikhiapeeth. A group of fifty-nine Greek devotees attended.

At midnight on 5th December of this year, Paramahamsaji entered into mahasamadhi and assumed eternal consciousness. According to the tradition of



paramahamsas, a Shodashi Pooja (sixteen-day ritual) was observed at Rikhiapeeth. From all over the world, disciples, devotees, friends and well-wishers flocked to Rikhia to offer shraddhanjali, tribute. Thirty people from Greece attended.

After the Shodashi anushtana, a Shraddhanjali Saptah (homage week) was held in his karmabhoomi, Ganga Darshan, Munger, from 24th to 30th December. Twenty Greek devotees attended this special homage week.



2009



2010: Twenty-nine devotees from Greece attended Guru Poornima. For the first time after Paramahamsaji's mahasamadhi, Rikhiapeeth commemorated Guru Poornima with a Guru Paduka Pooja dedicated to Swami Satyananda. The festivities were held in the presence of Swami Niranjanananda and Swami Satyasangananda. Paramahamsaji's presence was deeply felt during this time by numerous devotees attending the three-day celebrations. On the actual day of Guru Poornima, as Paramahamsaji's statue was carried into the Yajnasnana, all three thousand devotees spontaneously stood up in reverence at the sight of the beloved form.

Satsang with Swami Satyananda

Q. What are some of your memories of your time in Greece?

Paramahamsaji: In the Greek language, the word 'yoga' is written as 'yionga'. It is a very difficult language. They have translated many of my books into Greek and more are being translated every year. A very capable swami, Swami Sivamurti, is in charge of the ashram in Greece. It is in a village called Paiania. It is far away from the town and social events. They purchased land and grew vegetables. Of course, there were obstacles too; it was not all smooth sailing. But I took it as a challenge, because whenever you want to do some good work, you must always accept challenges. If the road is smooth, where is the challenge? Anybody can drive on a smooth road.

The Greeks are very simple, loving people and great bhaktas. Touching the feet is one thing, but they kiss the feet and even your clothes. In many ways, they are like Indians, but the Indians only touch the feet, while the Greeks kiss them with their lips! The Greek men and women are the epitome of beauty. The meaning of Athens, which is the capital of Greece, is Saraswati. Athena is the same as Saraswati, the goddess of learning. Similarly, the capital of Spain is Madrid, which means mother, in honour of the mother of Christ.

The Greek people are also religious, but as their country has progressed immensely in science, the scientists are atheists. They believe that matter is the truth and, as the soul cannot be seen, it is not possible that it exists.

Matter is tangible, therefore it is real. The soul cannot be seen, smelt, touched or felt, therefore it does not exist. That is the philosophy of Charvaka, to believe only in the existence of the four tattwas. Nevertheless, the Greek people are very emotional, devotional and loving.

Actually, almost all westerners love kirtan, japa and meditation. Whenever I visited the West, particularly Australia and Greece, we would have kirtan for hours! It is really true that in this Kali Yuga, doing kirtan to God will give you everything.

Q. How does the Ramacharitamanas teach us about life?

Paramahamsaji: The Ramacharitamanas is also called Tulsi Ramayana. It contains many kinds of verses in different metres which tell the story of Rama and Sita as it

was narrated by Lord Shiva to Goddess Parvati. Lord Shiva tells the entire story of Rama, Ravana and his brother, Kumbhakarna, who slept for six months of the year. The story of Rama is one thing and the war between Rama and Ravana is another. The story of Ramacharitamanas is the skeleton structure, over which the teachings are delicately woven. Just as while constructing a house, you erect a pillar of iron bars, then fill it with concrete, lay bricks, and finally plaster it, in the same way, the story of Rama is only the skeleton.

The real instruction is the teachings about life. It contains lessons on the philosophy of life, lessons on relationships, be it love between brother and sister, between two brothers, or between father and son, how these relationships should be lived and how they get



Satsang 1999

distorted. That is the speciality of Ramacharitamanas, otherwise there are many picture books of Rama's story and other versions like Valmiki Ramayana, Ananda Ramayana and Vikat Ramayana. These versions may have some differences in the stories, but the tradition remains unchanged.

There was a time when culture was spiritually-oriented. The modern scientific culture of today is spreading all over the place, although we call it western culture, because it originated in the West. In reality, it is a scientific culture. The previous cultures have been subdued everywhere, because mankind has become desirous of the comforts provided by scientific discoveries. However, there was a time when people were desirous of knowledge and righteousness.

In every age the needs of man change. Today, man needs telephones, cars and electricity. In that age people wanted liberation and they asked such questions as, "What is dvaita, advaita and vishishtadvaita?" They wanted to know what was written in the scriptures, what was said by Lord Buddha, and so on. For that reason, the rishis, munis, kings, merchants and warriors of that civilization spread their influence far and wide. The whole of South-East Asia: Burma, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Java and Sumatra, was influenced, and even today you find many archaeological remains there. At that time, the story of Rama had reached those countries. The people there accepted the story and chose Rama or Hanuman as their ishta devata. So, their concepts slowly became the same as ours.

Later on, there were vast upheavals in the states, empires, cultures and religions, as happens everywhere. During this chaos, the Indians could not maintain their influence. Just as the British could not maintain their empire, in the same way, Indians too could not keep their

grip. At that time, some things remained and many things were lost. After that, the story began to get distorted. Many new incidents were added and facts were changed. Somewhere, Sita became Rama's sister, and many changes like that took place. Then, when the Greeks invaded India, a new philosophy took root, led by Buddhism and Jainism. In both these religions you find the influence of Greek philosophy. They are shadowed by the thinking patterns of Aristotle and Plato. The atheism of the Buddhists and Jains is inspired by Greek philosophy. You can read in the archives and the stories of Plutarch that when Alexander came to India, he wished to meet the scholars. At Takshashila, he was introduced to Jain munis and he was even initiated by one.

Q. What did Alexander bring to India?

Paramahamsaji: Alexander did not come to India with a military force alone; he also brought Greek philosophers with him. He came with commanders as well as philosophers, because he wanted to talk with the Indian sages. The dialogues between Alexander, the Greek philosophers and the Indian philosophers are all recorded. You can read them in the archives. When he went from here, he took Kalyan Muni back with him. In the Greek language Kalyan became Kalanos. When Aristotle came to know that Alexander was greatly influenced by Kalyan Muni, he wrote a letter to him saying, "What are you doing? Instead of ruling over them you have become their disciple!" This letter is still preserved.

Q. Why is it important for Greece and India to work together?

Paramahamsaji: It is necessary that India and Greece try to live and work together, but before that happens, we have to fight our way out. The fusion of two chemicals

into one another is preceded by much reaction. Greece may not be as prosperous today as most of the other European nations, but we cannot deny that it has been the birthplace of a philosophy, a way of life, a dharma and a civilization.

Q. What is the significance of Greek philosophy and its impact on western civilization?

Paramahamsaji: I knew that Greece is beautiful. As a matter of fact, Greece is the mother of western culture. Western science, medicine and technology have all originated in Greece. The western social system is the Utopia of Plato, which has come true. Plato thought of an ideal society, like that which is found in the West today, in countries such as England, Switzerland or Australia. Of course, these countries have developed a lot since then. It is Greek culture, thought, philosophy and medicine, which is at the root of their culture. What is western philosophy? Except for Greek philosophy, there is no western philosophy as such.

*In Buddhism and Jainism, you
find the influence of Greek
philosophy. They are shadowed
by the thinking patterns of
Aristotle and Plato.*

Darshan with Swami Satyananda

The following are extracts from transcripts of darshan given by Paramahamsaji to devotees and Greek groups during 2007-2009.

Rajasooya Yajna 2007: Global warming

About 1,700,000 years ago, the Ice Age prevailed on Earth. After that, global warming started. Global warming is not a phenomenon of today; it is just that you are only becoming aware of it now. Global warming started several thousand years ago. It was due to global warming that Dwarka submerged. In the future something else will be submerged; the Ice Age will come again, and it will be followed by the emergence of something else. Then you will realize how these things happen. Therefore, do not look at everything from the perspective you have today, but from a scientific point of view.

As far as global warming is concerned, it is a natural occurrence. The human contribution to global warming is negligible; it is limited to carbon and greenhouse gases. This is the view of most people today. It may not be the view of the government and other agencies, but it is certainly the common view that global warming is a natural reality. Even if you do reduce these gases, the warming will continue.

The train is running and you are also running, holding your suitcase, inside the train! Why? You will not reach Kolkata any faster by doing that. Global warming is not going to decrease or increase because of you. You may try a thousand ways, block your nostrils, stop the carbon

being produced inside you, turn the whole world into a forest, but global warming will go on because it is a natural event. Why is it a natural event? Because this solar system is not static. It is a wanderer! Today it is no longer where it was yesterday. It is continuously moving in this infinite universe. Sometimes it comes close to other stellar systems that are cold and then an ice age begins.

Sometimes it comes close to hot stellar systems. There isn't just one stellar system in the universe. There isn't just one sun in the universe; there are many suns bigger than our sun. Now, if your solar system is passing close to a large stellar system, you are bound to have global warming for 20,000 years. To pass 'closely' will not take two or three days; it will take ten to twelve thousand years.



Darshan 2007

Therefore, what is the contribution of the gases produced by man to this global warming? This is my question. We will have to look for a scientific answer to this question, not an emotional or a political one. Is this solar system steady at one point? Is this universe static? No. The universe is not static, everything is moving. Rabindranath Tagore writes:

*Grahataaraka chandra diwaakara vyaakula druta vege
Koree chhe paana koree chhe snaana akkhaya kirane
Aananda loke.*

Like an anxious person, they are all running at great speed – the sun, the moon, the stars, everything.

Sometimes a big stellar system comes close and global warming begins. The Arctic and Antarctic regions start melting. By stopping the digging of mines, global warming will not go away. I am telling you this very clearly. The modern concept of environmental science lacks coherent scientific thinking. We have to go scientifically, not emotionally, and not for political reasons.

Rajasooya Yajna 2008

There is a difference between an ashram and a yoga centre. When I talk about an ashram, I mean a place where they have their property, their own houses, their inmates, and their program. That is what I mean by an ashram. This is an ashram. Munger is an institute. There, for every course, you have to pay. It's an institution and obeys a law system. Here, it is an ashram. Students can come and can go, it belongs to them. But Munger is an institute; it does not belong to the students. It's an institute; it belongs to the committee and the board, and all that. This belongs to everybody. You can stay here. You can stay here, no problem.

Similarly, Sivamurti has an ashram in Greece. I call that an ashram, not a centre; it's not a centre. She has centres in Greece: Athens, Thessaloniki, and Mitilini, they are centres. The ashram in Greece is at Paiania. It is away from Athens. It is in a village like this. How many inmates live there permanently?

Swami Sivamurti: Thirty.

Paramahamsaji: Three zero? Good number! Good. But Sivamurti is not Greek, she's Australian. Have you ever been to Kalamata? It is very close to Sparta. Do you know what Sparta is? Sparta is a place in Greece. There, in the ancient days, when a child was born, he was left out in



Darshan 2008

the courtyard for the whole night and, if he survived in the morning, then he was taken in. Today we use the term 'Spartan health'.

Spartan health means one who has the strength to survive all the odds, through cold, or heat, or problems. Most villagers in India are Spartans. Do you understand? They drink the water from the pond, but they survive. If you drank it, you would immediately get cholera. In a few days you would

die. Spartan health is the basic concept of health. If a child is born with basic health, then even if you leave him outside in the courtyard for the whole night without any shelter or protection, he still lives because he has the stamina. If he has stamina, he has good health. A man with stamina is called Spartan. Am I right? I have been to Sparta and those islands, you know? There are so many islands. I don't know how you remember them all; thousands of islands.

Swami Sivamurti: Six thousand. Can you describe some of the obstacles you encountered during your visits to Greece?

Paramahamsaji: I had very tough opposition in Greece from the church. Swami Sivamurti used to paste posters . . . which hotel was it?

Swami Sivamurti: The Rex Hotel in Kalamata.

Paramahamsaji: In the evening posters were put up and,



Darshan 2008

during the night, people used to come and take them down and throw them away. Then they published a book on me. All rubbish!

For many years it was a problem. In those days when I used to go to Greece, Swami Sivamurti would accommodate me near the ashram. She would put me in a hotel, and put some other name, not my name, in the reservation. I was incognito!

Swami Sivamurti: Paramahamsaji, now the new bishop in Kalamata is pro-yoga.

Paramahamsaji: The face of religion is changing, and the church now has no choice but to accept yoga! The priests

in Greece, and everywhere else, are talking about yoga. That is because when you talk about yoga it means you are talking about the mind, you are not talking about God. When you are talking about yoga, you are talking about the mental behaviour and mental knowledge. You are not talking about God in yoga. We may not be talking about God, but of course we believe in God.

We are talking about the two forces in the physical body: the mind and the body. An imbalance between the two, or a balance between the two; that's the yoga we are talking about. Religion has to accept it. Science has to accept it. Science has accepted it: matter and energy.

Where is energy? In matter. Where is matter? Here! Matter is energy. Similarly, this is the body, and this body contains spirit. They have to accept yoga.

Yoga Poornima 2008

Q. What is the purpose behind celebrating one's birthday and one's life?

Paramahamsaji: When you celebrate your birthday, please remember that you were born with a purpose, and the purpose cannot be enjoyment. The purpose cannot be bhoga. You see, there is no way out of bhoga. When you



Darshan 2008

go from here to Kolkata, for example, what is your aim? What is your destination? You might take tea on your way, sometimes smoke also, and take breakfast as well. You are also sleeping on the train sometimes, you may have many dreams, but that is not the purpose for which you are on the train. No, that is not the purpose. Enjoy, marry, have children, have a lot of money, a good house, and all kinds of luxuries that science, society and company can give! Enjoy them, I'm not against that. But that is not the purpose for which you are born. I'm not against it. Have a good dress, cosmetics to look nice, have a boyfriend, have a girlfriend! I'm not going to tell you that you shouldn't have them if you want to. But that is not the purpose for which you have been ordained; that is not the purpose for which you have been given this precious human life.

This human body is a precious human body, and it is a perfect design of God. Sometimes God has been bringing designs like Ramakrishna and others, and some of them are universal also. God has initially designed human beings because God is very kind. He said, "Yes I am. But I wonder how I can become known to this chap? I want to reveal Myself to you." Listen to me very carefully. God is thinking, "I want to reveal Myself to this chap, but this chap is not looking at Me." God is so kind, He wants to reveal Himself to you. But you should tune yourself. God wants to talk to you. God wants to reveal Himself to you, because He's very keen. He's also been very lonely, He's all alone, and He wants to spend time with you. God is often feeling very lonely. "I am one; let there be many," have you heard this? So, if that be the truth, then your birthday, my birthday is very important. It reminds me today that eighty-five years ago God created me so that I may talk to Him. So that He may reveal Himself to me. When I was born, my mother kissed me, gave me milk, loved me so much that if I said, "Mummy, I want to talk to God, I want

to talk to God", she was afraid. She said, "Oh my God, after so many years of marriage, I've got him, and now this boy wants to go away! Where are you going away?" "To God!" From God I came. What is the harm in going back to one's own home? God is our ultimate home. God is our ultimate abode. From there we came, and to there we go.

The purpose of human life is not to enjoy, not to run after the luxuries, not to run after the fleeting beauties, not to run after the fleeting objects; they will come to you. But your ultimate destination is not the train; your ultimate destination is not the tea, or cigarette, or the gossip, nor the papers that you read on the train. No, that is not your destination. That is another aspect of the journey. The ultimate purpose is Kolkata. The ultimate purpose of life is realizing your own Self. "You're not the body," Swami Sivananda said. You're not the mind, you're not the indriyas, the senses, you are not the pancha tattwas, the five elements. You are beyond all that. You have to transcend it. How do you transcend it? All gurus have said, first of all have a guru, and then have a mantra. Go on practising it: abcd, abcd; then sentences; then paragraphs; then an essay; and then a subject. How do we learn a language? How do we learn mathematics? How do you learn things? In the same way, you develop in the spiritual life, one by one, starting with the mantra of the guru, which is the kindergarten of spiritual life.

Don't be in a hurry. No, don't be in a hurry. If you take a year or two, or three or five, twenty or forty or fifty, even then, you may not get it in this lifetime. Next time again then. Because God has given you infinite lives. Just as your educational system has given you infinite classes, created this level and that level, God has also given you many lives, do not doubt that. I tell you, not from my knowledge, but from my experience, there is eternal life. This is not the first time I'm born, and this won't be the

last time. I'll be born again and you'll be born again. The truth is that karma is real. Life is real. There is a continuity of time. There is a continuity of space. There is a continuity of object. Why should there not be a continuity of life? It's simple logic; time is continuous, space is continuous, object is continuous, so why not me continuous? Why should I stop at the point of my death? That is only a full stop; it is not the end of my book! It may be the end of the chapter, but not the end of the book. So you'll get many chances. Start with guru and guru mantra, and go on.

God has initially designed human beings because God is very kind. He said, "Yes I am. But I wonder how I can become known to this chap? I want to reveal myself to you." Listen to me very carefully.

God is thinking, "I want to reveal myself to this chap, but this chap is not looking at me."

God is so kind, He wants to reveal Himself to you. But you should tune yourself. God wants to talk to you.

When the Mind becomes Quiet . . .

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

The difference between soul and spirit? It is very subtle, soul and spirit. Yes, I know. If you study Vedanta, you will understand more about it. Atma: self, paramatma: Supreme Self, and jivatma: individual self. There is electricity, a power house, and a bulb in this room. How to differentiate between them, and how to understand them? This is a bulb. In the power house there is electricity. They are three, and they are one. The Supreme Soul projects itself; the Supreme Energy projects itself in the form of the light that is here. But this is not the Supreme Soul; this is the individual bulb. This is called individual soul, jivatma. Where it is graded in thousands of megawatts, then you can say it is paramatma or the Supreme Self. I am just giving you an example of how to understand this concept.

This is the physical body, this is matter. It has a mind in it. The mind is in the brain. Brain is matter. Mind is not matter. Brain is matter. Mind is not matter, but the mind is in the brain. This bulb is matter. The electricity is in the bulb, but electricity is not the bulb. It is just an example.

This brain has a mind. And this mind is the seat of the individual soul, the Supreme Soul, or the soul, or the spirit. You can call it by any name. Spirit and soul are the same. This mind is the base. Everything starts with the mind.

The body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, the Self . . . this is how it goes.

When you take matter, such as uranium or plutonium, it is just matter. You enrich it by certain processes in physics. The energy comes out, or separates. You either say the energy comes out or the energy manifests. Say anything you like. It means that the energy was already existing in the uranium when you did not see it.

Similarly, the Self is in the mind, but you don't see it. I am not talking about the body. The body has the brain. The brain has the mind. The mind has the spirit, and you cannot see the spirit. You cannot see the mind either. You cannot even see thoughts; you can only know thoughts. You can say, "Yes, I have a thought", but you don't see a thought. You can see an object. You can see the light. You don't see the sound. You can't see a smell. You can't see a touch, you can't see a thought, and you can't see your own passions. You can't see your own fears, you only experience them. You experience them because you have the capacity to experience. If you didn't have the capacity to experience, you'd be like an animal. Dogs don't know many things, cats don't know many things, pigs don't know many things, donkeys don't know many things, and birds don't know many things. They are not aware of the experience because their mind has not separated those emotions, perceptions, and experiences.

When the mind becomes quiet, then you can see the Self. The mind is always full of turbulence. What is the mind? How do you explain the mind? You say it is a thought, an emotion, a feeling, or it is knowledge. Mind is an experience. That's all. Which you are

able to experience, but not Poorna the dog. Not the donkey, because they have not evolved to that point of experience. In the scale of evolution, they are still lower. We human beings have come to a point of awareness where we can experience our own mind. Maybe tomorrow you will be able to experience your own Self! Today you are not in that position. The evolution has not reached the point today that you are able to experience your Self. You are able to experience your emotions. You are able to experience your passions. You are experiencing memory. You can experience love and hate, and this and that, but you are not able to experience your Self. In order to experience your Self, it is important to calm down the mind. But the mind will not calm down. The most difficult thing in the world is to calm the mind. If you are able to calm the mind, you have conquered the whole world. You are fighting with an enemy who you don't know. You are fighting with an enemy who you have not seen. You are fighting with an enemy whose whereabouts you don't know. Therefore, the sages and wise men say, first of all you should withdraw, you should take away all those things that influence the mind. Mind is influenced by love, hatred, happiness, sorrow, worries and expectations. The mind is affected by these. The mind is a very quiet substance, but these influences affect the mind so much. Then the mind becomes agitated. When it becomes agitated, you are not able to see your Self. You only see your passions, your fears, your sorrows, etc. You don't see your Self.

In Vedanta, they have come to a conclusion: witness the mind, watch the mind, don't interfere, be impartial and remain impartial. The mind is thinking of fear, the mind is thinking of envy, the mind is thinking of

jealousy, the mind is thinking of happiness, the mind is thinking of many things. Don't be affected by it, just be a spectator of the match, just as you go to a cinema house and see what's happening there. If you interfere with the mind, you cannot help it. When you watch the mind, it sits down quietly.

Ultimately, the Self, jivatma, individual soul, paramatma, Supreme Soul, the soul, the body, the mind, are one substance, not two. From that one substance, two has come, and three has come, and four has come; one plus one, plus one, plus one. Some people see one, and some say no, not even one, zero. The ultimate theory and philosophy in India is: either everything is evolved from one and goes back to one, or everything evolves from zero and goes back to zero. It's up to you what you want to believe!

Frankly speaking, teaching and preaching is not in my nature. My nature is to just sit down quietly, and let the mind roam wherever it goes, because he is my friend, he is my companion, he is everything to me. He is always with me, he is a rascal also. He's a very good companion. He can dream, he can inspire, he can feel passions, he can feel jealousy, very good. A child, a brother, a friend. I live with him, and he has never caused a problem for me, because I have already accepted him as he is. Get this point clearly. I have adjusted with my mind, I have no problem with him, whatever it does. Mischief? I say, "Okay, very nice!"

Lord Krishna also did the same thing. He used to do a lot of mischief. If you have read the life of Sri Krishna, you will know that he was the naughtiest boy, most mischievous, sometimes even vicious. So my mind thinks of passions? Okay, no problem. What can I do? He

lives with me, I can't fight with him, I don't want to fight with him. I don't want to get into a wrong relationship with him. I don't want to get into a wrong relationship with the man who lives with me all the time. You get my point? You can get into a wrong relationship with a man who comes to you off and on, but a fellow who lives in your bed, sleeps with you on your bed, you are fighting with him day and night? No, I am not going to do it. My mind is my friend. Then and now.

Then I was working for my guru. He told me to teach yoga, I did it. Then I said, "Salaam" and left the ashram. I came here, I lived in Gauri Ganesh. All alone, all day, no problem. I have three storeys, sometimes up, sometimes down; I go up and down. I have nothing to do; I don't read the Ramayana, I don't read the Bhagavad Gita, I don't read the Bible, I don't write spiritual books, and I don't write secular literature; nothing. I just sit down. My mind also sits down by my side, my mind asks me, "Paramahamsaji, shall I think like this?" I say, "Do it." "Shall I go out with Sivamurti?" I say, "Go. No problem." What is there? You can think anything. The mind is you. It is you who is the mind. It is the mind which is you, and you are fighting with yourself. You are all schizophrenic. I am not schizophrenic, because I am not fighting with myself. I am at peace with myself.

So all these talks, which I give here and there, are not to teach you, because that is not my dharma, that is not my nature, that is not my swabhava.

Everybody has his own destiny. Everybody has come with a destiny. A mango will become a mango, it will never become an apricot, even when you punch it. A lemon tree will always grow lemons, it will not become mango, even if you inject it. You have a destiny. I have a

destiny. So be at home with yourself! Sometimes there are mental problems. Say, "Okay." The mind makes mischief. Sometimes my Poorna also does the same, he makes mischief! I say, "Sit down. Quiet."

— Darshan at Rikhiapeth, 4 December 2008



Swami Satyananda with Poorna the dog

Guru Poornima 2009

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Q. Can you tell us something about what it is like there, where you are and how you perceive the world?

Paramahamsaji: The world? I have not made the world. I am not the Creator! The world is going on as per the plan of the Creator. If it is a bad world, He wants it. If it is a nice world, He wants it. If the people are materialistic today, He wants it. If the people are spiritual today, He wants it. You are not the Creator. I am not the Creator. The Secretary of the United Nations is not the Creator; the President of America is not the Creator; the President of the Soviet Union, or India, or China, or any country, is not the Creator. Man is not the Creator; he is the creation. And, if the Creator wants that I should be a stupid fellow, then I am a stupid fellow. The Creator wanted this stupid fellow to become a great sannyasin, so I am a great sannyasin.

You are not the Creator. You are the creation. All that you see is not the Creator; it is creation. The sun, the moon, the stars, the galaxies, time, space and object; that is all creation. Srishti, creation. Many times I used to think the world is becoming very bad, everybody is becoming very materialistic, everybody is becoming so bad, but then what can you do with this bad and this good? You should only be a sakshi, a witness, to what is happening, whether right or wrong. The house is burning, and I see it. The flood is coming, millions are dying, and I see it. Love, compassion, grace, is not my business. I am a witness to the glory of God. The whole of creation is born out of a single desire of someone. I am one of it, and so are you. So, don't mind what happens. Everything is going on perfectly well and, if you don't like it, close your eyes.

Paramahamsaji, you've been where you are which we cannot even imagine. Where you are, what do you see? How do you see us?

I see you like a television picture: everybody is coming and going, and coming and going, and coming and going.

Q. What is my dharma?

Paramahamsaji: Do your daily duties as required by your body and mind, and your child. That's all. The dharma of a mother is definitely defined. The dharma of a mother is not the dharma of a wife. The dharma of a mother is not the dharma of a woman. The mother's dharma is to play the role of the first guru. The mother is the first guru. She teaches the child how to speak, how to walk, how to do this and that, and everything physically. She will have to teach her child what to eat and what not to eat. Then she

will have to teach her child what to think, how to think and how not to think: samskaras, impressions.

You have to change the genetic model, because when the child was in your womb, you have contributed certain genetics, ammunitions. They may be positive, they may be negative. When the child is born, it is born with that genetic code. It may be positive or it may be negative. So, you have to balance those genetic codes through thought, through proper thinking. Up to a certain age, the genes can be influenced, altered and balanced. They can even be eradicated. However, once puberty starts, the gonads develop and after that is it not possible to alter the genetic model of the child. After that, only certain very good or bad situations can change it. Like Siddhartha became Buddha. Something happened, something happened there. After puberty, changes can take place only through something great or through traumatic experiences.



Darshan 2009



Swami Niranjana with Sannyasi Atmaja, Siva and Jiva

Traumatic experiences do take place. Otherwise, your dharma, or the dharma of every mother who gives birth to a child, is to see that the body-mind machine which you have manufactured has no defects, that there is no manufacturing defects within or by your machine. If there are manufacturing defects, then there may be a defect in the child's thinking, breathing, eating and talking. There are so many manufacturing defects in the machine that you need to check. That is your dharma, and that is the dharma of every mother. Mother is the first guru and, up to the time he's a brahmachari or she's a kanya, you can change the child. You see our kanyas, our brahmacharis? They will change. Once puberty begins, they are not kanyas

or brahmacharis really. Then they develop complexes.

Seven years is the age. The vedic civilization, on which the dharma of India is based, is not Hindu. It is vedic. The Vedas say that in the life of a child, the initiation ceremonies start from the time the mother conceives him in the womb. It is called the garbhadaṇa samskara. Then, at the age of six months, comes solid food. Not before then. Before then only milk, either the mother's milk or cow's milk. This is in India. I'm not talking about Greece. The child lives only on the mother's milk or cow's milk for up to 180 days. The giving of solid food is one samskara, called annaprashana. He's given light kheer, rice porridge, at the age of six months. It is a very big ceremony.



According to whether the child is a boy or girl, there are different samskaras. The son is given a sacred thread and a tuft, and then he's given the Gayatri mantra and the vow of celibacy so he will not have anything to do with a girl before he's married; he enters the brahmacharya stage. At the age of seven, he's called a brahmachari, and has the sacred thread made up of three strings. After he is married, he is given six strings.

There are many other samskaras. Even marriage in India is not for progeny only. It is a samskara; it is a process of enrichment of life. In India, the physical relationship, the relationship between a man and a woman, is holy. It is a dharma. You don't call it sex, no. It is holy; it has to be done because it is necessary, designed by nature. Sex is not a sin in India or in vedic philosophy. It is a dharma. So, I have told you the dharma of a mother.

Sri Ganeshaya Namaha

Darshan with Paramahamsaji on 6 July 2009 with the Greek group that travelled to India for the Guru Poornima celebrations.

Paramahamsaji: They are all with Sivamurti, it's your tribe in Greece? (laughing).

Swami Satsangi: Please stand up and say "Namo Narayan".

Paramahamsaji: I know all of you, I know everybody.

The Greek group says 'Namo Narayan' to Paramahamsaji.

Swami Sivamurti: Paramahamsaji, this is Atmaja with her baby. He is one year old.

Paramahamsaji: I know, I know the baby.

Swami Satsangi introduces Atmaja's children: Shiva and Jiva.

Paramahamsaji: Shiva and Jiva (laughing).

Q. Atmaja asks: Is there something from our previous lives that we need to know now to help improve this life?

Paramahamsaji: When a mango tree is reborn, it is always reborn as a mango tree. An olive tree, when it is reborn, it is always reborn as an olive tree. An olive tree cannot become an apricot, mango, or a lemon. An olive will only become an olive. The only thing that can be improved with the olive, is if you give the olive the right food, the right fertilizer, the right protection, and the right pruning. You cannot change the destiny of your child. Destiny can't be changed. A mango becomes a mango, the rascal becomes a rascal, a saint becomes a saint, and a guava becomes a guava. However, the quality of the olive or apricot can

be improved. In order to improve the quality, you have to provide the right food. The right food is thoughts and ideas, man eats ideas. A cow eats grass. A tiger eats meat. A bird eat insects. But man does not live by bread alone. That's written in the Bible. Man lives by ideas. I am living on ideas. An idea is a thought that comes into your mind. If you have no ideas, you are not a man. And if you can't give the right ideas to your child, you are not a good mother. If your child believes that he can live by bread alone, then he is an animal. That is the answer to your question.

Q. The small boy Jiva asks Paramahamsaji: Are you Lord Shiva?

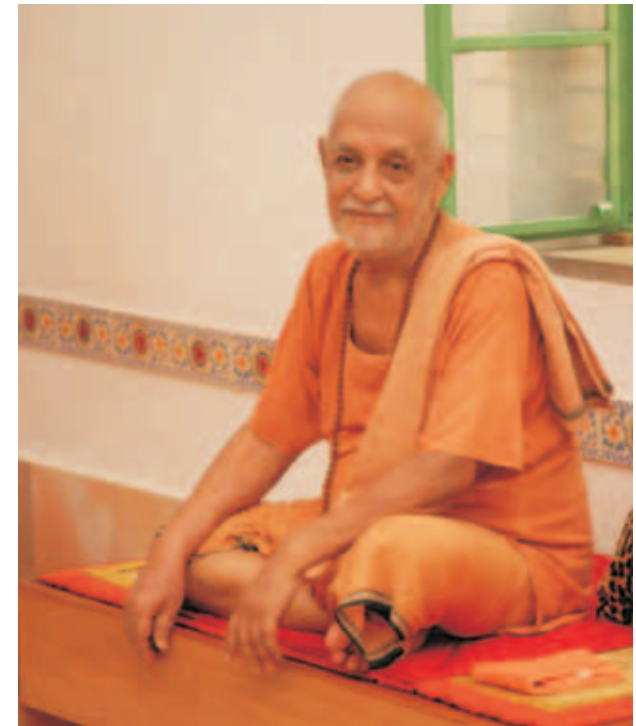
Paramahamsaji turns to the small boy, and with eyes filled with love says: Are you Ganesha? (and everyone is entranced.)

Q. Question from Atmaja: Last night he wanted to know the story of Ganesha, how Ganesha came to be Ganesha.

Paramahamsaji: The people of India give a shape to an idea. In the West, they reject it. They say an idea has no shape. God has no shape. Islam says God has no shape. Zoroastrian religion says, God has no shape. But India says, the Vedas say that God is an idea. You agree with me? If God is an idea, you should have a shape for it. Intelligence is an idea. You have intelligence, I have, everybody has. What is the shape? Lord Ganesha is the shape of intelligence. Lord Ganesha is the shape of intelligence, buddhi ke devata, an idea into a shape.

Shiva is an idea, it is in you. But what is his shape? Shiva with matted locks, with Ganga, with snake, with tiger skin, naked, and with a beautiful wife by his side. He lives like a sannyasi, he lives like a yogi, he lives like a madman, he lives like God. That is the shape of Shiva. Similarly, we have a shape for intelligence, we have a shape for talent.

The gods and goddesses in the Vedas are the symbols of ideas. So, Ganesha is the lord of intelligence. Whatever work you do, cooking, killing, shooting, loving, destroying, making, the first thing is intelligence. Without intelligence, you can't do or begin anything. Even if you want to kill somebody, you must have intelligence. If you want to do all the wrong things, first you should have intelligence. So, in India, whatever work they do, the first thing they say is, Om Sri Ganeshaya Namaha. Ganesha is the first God in India that is worshipped, not Rama, not Krishna, not Shiva, not Brahma, not Vishnu, not Saraswati, not even guru. The first is Ganesha, because intelligence is the beginning of an action. Am I clear? Intelligence is the beginning, and if you are not intelligent you can't do anything.



Some Memories of Paramahamsaji

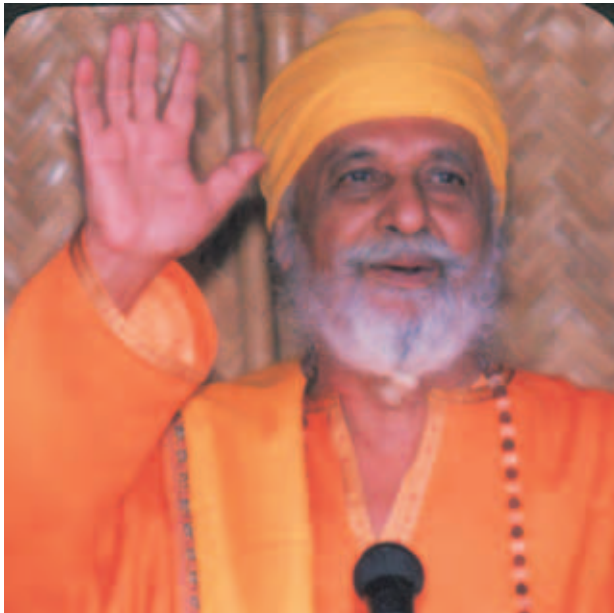
Indweller of the heart

Swami Sivamurti Saraswati

If there is a show in the form of beautiful ideas, lovely pearls make their appearance in the form of poetic effusions.

If those pearls are pierced with skill and strung together on the beautiful thread of Sri Rama's exploits and if noble souls wear them in their innocent heart, grace in the form of excessive fondness is the result.

—Sri Ramacharitamanas



Since 1994, the gates of what was then known to us as the akhara, opened every successive year to all who could wend their way, like pilgrims of old, to be once more in the physical presence of Paramahamsaji and receive his darshan. How can a disciple describe what this opportunity means? Language cannot express the depth of feeling, whose true expression lies not in an effusion of words, but in the silent mystery of the heart.

Those of us, travelling east from Europe, leave countries in the depth of winter, where the skies are grey, the wind bitter, the air damp, and the light dim. We arrive at the akhara to a profusion of colour, of flowers of all shades and hues, and, in a brilliant Indian light, we join with others from all over the world, to spend the short time available, in the presence of a man who has changed the course of our lives, and who, each time we visit, gives us more guidance and wisdom.

For me, Paramahamsaji's guidance was not always in what he said, but in what lay just beneath what he said, like the flesh of a fruit when you peel off the skin. What lies under the surface tastes differently to each according to need. Darshan with Paramahamsaji has been, for me, like a Byzantine mosaic. Each moment had its place in a whole that glowed with brilliance, mystery and beauty. The following are just fragments, not always of his actual words, but of my impressions, captured for a moment in time and savoured later again and again. Now they rise once more to the surface, as I ponder over them, and allow these memories to dance again in my heart.

He sat clasping his hands so gently as though he were touching the light itself. His expression was of a child, full of wonder and innocence. His head tilted to the curve of his shoulder, and his smile radiated delight to us all. Purity sat before us, purity and sweetness, and for a brief moment we had a glimpse of who he really was.

"It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter that you're not top dog. Fame, name or what you achieve in life, these belong to the world, and are not important in spiritual life. Success in spiritual life is gained through the daily occurrences of life, in living each moment to uplift another and in forgetting yourself. You should not be concerned with your own desires and achievements, but in attending to the needs of others, and then, and only then, will you find happiness.

Success of the world is equated with the ego and is illusory. It is not real; only the spirit is real. You can achieve all the fame in the world and still be unhappy. Contentment comes only when you live for others. This doesn't mean you don't strive to be happy. Of course, you do; life is meant to be enjoyed. But enjoyment of life, real enjoyment, comes only when you give to another. This happiness cannot be understood through the intellect, but only through daily practice and experience."



We've heard him say this again and again. But do we really understand? Every now and then in our lives a certain incident occurs, and for a moment time pauses, and we sigh, "Ah! Yes, that's it. That's what he meant", and then life moves on and we forget.

The guru is a channel, a channel or interpreter for the divine source. Progress is up to the disciple. If the disciple is open to the guru, and is able to perceive the divine within, then the guru is able to bring out the divine in the disciple. It is a very subtle and gradual transformation. The spiritual life is not to be rushed. Never be in a hurry.



The spiritual life does not belong to one life. Growth is ongoing through countless lives. We've all been together many, many times as minerals, insects, animals, husbands, wives, lovers, enemies and friends. Why be in a hurry? Life is to be savoured and enjoyed in all its infinite variety and colour. If you have expectations, you will be disappointed and criticize yourself and others. Expectations drag you down. Trust in the guru, open your eyes to the divine in the guru, and then you will see the divine in others and in yourself.

*Keep Ithaca always in mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it goes on for years
So you're old by the time you reach the island,
Wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
Not expecting Ithaca to make you rich.*

*Ithaca gave you the marvellous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She hasn't anything else to give.*

*And if you find her poor, Ithaca won't have fooled you.
Wise as you'll have become, and so experienced,
You'll have understood by then what an Ithaca means.*

—C.P. Cavafy

Attachment one should have, but not selfish attachment. Paramahamsaji perhaps we could say was attached to his villagers, but only for their welfare and needs. This attachment didn't bring suffering but joy. Can such an attachment be wrong or incorrect?

Take care of others' needs, and your needs will be taken care of; take care of others' prosperity, and your prosperity will be taken care of; take care of others'

moksha, and your moksha will be taken care of. Serve the poor, feed the hungry, care for the sick, go from door to door to see what their problems are. This is the only path to peace. These are the commands of Christ and of all spiritual masters, "Love your neighbour as yourself." "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." There is nothing else you need to know. The secret lies simply in implementation.

Ataban, the fourth wise man, sought Christ all his life, but was always waylaid by someone needing his care and attention. As he lay dying, he saw the risen Christ, and said



to him, "Lord, it's you. You're alive. Oh Master, I have long sought you. Forgive me. Once I had precious gifts to give, now I have nothing." Christ said to him, "Ataban, you've already given your gifts to me." "I don't understand, my Lord", Ataban replied. Christ then said, "When I was hungry, you gave me to eat; when I was thirsty you gave me to drink; when I was naked you clothed me; homeless, and you took me in." Ataban said, "Oh, not so, my saviour. I never saw you hungry nor thirsty; I never clothed you; I never brought you into my home; I've never seen you until now." Christ replied, "Whenever you did these things for the least of my brothers, you did them for me."

God only wants one thing: that we love him. God is always with us, guiding, helping and inspiring us, but we don't hear him because of our continual judging and criticizing of one another. All he wants is for us to love him, but we love his creation more. See the divine in your guru. Love the one who personifies the divine for you. Step off the treadmill that turns on and on in ever widening circles of personal desires and attachments. Turn your whole heart and mind to God.

I bow to the lotus feet of my Guru, who is an ocean of mercy and is no other than Sri Hari himself in human form,



and whose words are sunbeams as it were for dispersing the mass of darkness in the form of gross ignorance.

—Sri Ramacharitamanas

"God is out and out sweet," Paramahamsaji said. "The heart has no brain. Love can make mountains move. It is a very powerful thing. Therefore rely on your bhakti, on your emotions, not on your brain. What is your relationship with God? You need to discover your relationship with God. Find a way to be receptive to God's voice through the words of the guru. Make an effort, find the way."

The life is spent without remembering God.

What is the use of having a well without water; a bird without feathers? No use.

*Which Rama do you worship?
There is Rama, the indweller of the heart;
Rama, the creator of the cosmos, sun, moon, stars;
Rama, the transcendental.
The surest, the easiest, the safest, is Rama, the indweller
of the heart.
You have wasted your life without remembering God.
Without remembering God's name you cannot get peace.
God is immanent as well as transcendental.
It is foolish to say, not to worship God with a form.
I call Him Rama, the indweller of the heart.*

—Paramahamsaji, Ram Naam Aradhana

We try and make ourselves happy. But it is when you make others happy, that happiness then chases you. Everything in life is spinning, moving, progressing, evolving. One should dance through life. Dance has no language; dance opens the heart. Surround your life with dance and music. Learn to play with life.

Having been able to watch Paramahamsaji was to learn all that we needed to learn. Hospitality is an example. He was always on the alert to see that everyone's needs were taken care of. Not for one moment did he lose himself. His eyes were not just on those in front of the stage, but on the sannyasins looking after the visitors as they entered. Have they been shown to the correct seat; are they comfortable? If he thought this task had been neglected, he quickly corrected it, and then moved on in his discourse. Such a quick reproof that few noticed it had been made. His concentration was also so one-pointed. Nothing missed his attention. The guest must always feel welcome and be treated with courtesy and care; the guest is a representative of divinity.

He gave us so many gifts. Of course it was not the gift that was important here, but the blessing it represented



that was being transferred. Life had subtle changes after one received a gift.

All the real teachings came to life as he played before us. He played, not to use people, but to move with the energies of life as they shifted and changed in their tone and in their timbre. He played with these energies, simply, so others could be transformed.

From time to time again he would pause and shift gear, and was a child once more. One could see his vulnerability, like an exquisite piece of porcelain one can hold to the light and see through. But the courage, the risk in being so open. Porcelain can so easily slip from our hands. How often it is smashed to pieces. How to remain open; how to remain vulnerable; how to live the price?

*Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
of night and light and the half-light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.*

—W.B. Yeats

It is a mark of greatness in the disciple if he or she is able to recognize the greatness and glory of the guru. For me, three of Paramahamsaji's close disciples show this recognition, through the example of their behaviour. They are aware of their place in the mosaic enfolding before us.

One year, during the Ram Naam Aradhana, and also in the Sita Kalyanam festivities, I remember Paramahamsaji said that if there was ever a clash between his role of

being a guru or a sannyasin, he would choose that of the sannyasin. His spiritual successor, Swami Niranjan, never would use the seat assigned to him beside his guru, but choose to sit unobtrusively on the steps nearby. This quiet act of Swami Niranjan's spoke far more effectively than any discourse on the guru-disciple relationship. Through his demeanour we saw Swami Niranjan, a guru in his own right, placing his role as a sannyasin first, before us all, with a quiet but piercing clarity.

There was always a grace in the way Swami Niranjan greeted and introduced the speakers that showed in his deft movements to ensure no awkward moments would arise during these programs. He was alert, always ready to take care of a guest of Paramahamsaji. Before us was the example of one who was able to balance all the varied occurrences that demand the attention of a master of ceremonies, from the needs of the eminent spiritual leaders to those of the akhara workers. He moved through the events like a top spinning on a wire; nothing must fall down, or be out of place. He maintained the harmony; he kept it all in perfect balance.

Swami Satsangi was seldom there in the early yajnas. She appeared after supervising all that needed to be done behind the scenes. She placed herself in the background and this enabled Paramahamsaji, Swami Niranjan and the guests to have more focus. She completed the triangle that moved as a unit, enabling us all to enjoy the festivities to the fullest. She too understood and played her role, as she moved in and out of the proceedings. And always so radiant. But not just because of her striking appearance, but because of an inner grace which shined through her inherent modesty. Swami Satsangi, a woman not only of today but of tomorrow, combined the lifestyle of a sannyasin with the grace of the East and the flair of the West.

Choti Swamiji, Swami Atmananda (now deceased), was one of Paramahamsaji's first disciples and was always there as she has always been. Her hallmark was of steadiness; an anchor one can depend on. A source of strength and inspiration for all of us who have been disciples for a long time. Choti Swamiji was proof that the years of training and struggling with all the tests and trials work. No matter what the apparent contradictions or seemingly difficult circumstances, she still continued with the same faith and enthusiasm, and was one-pointed and effervescent.

Two events occurred, which, for me, were particular fragments which completed the mosaic. One was the cosmic mass which was co-celebrated by Paramahamsaji and the Rev. Antoinette Schoenmaker from the Independent Church of Australia. Paramahamsaji was dressed in long black robes and looked much like a Greek Orthodox priest. The celebration was a very joyful one





with much laughter and humour, and filled with much interactive participation from the congregation. It was particularly poignant for me, because Antoinette is the daughter of the Rev. Mario Schoenmaker, who passed away at the beginning of that year, and who was originally chosen as the celebrant. It was inspiring to see a woman in this role of priest alongside Paramahamsaji, who has always advocated the coming leadership of women.

Paramahamsaji and Antoinette were like children playing the game of life, not wanting to outstrip the other, moving in and out of the ceremony with graceful ease and refinement.

The other event was the marriage ceremony between a Greek man and a Greek woman, which symbolized the marriage of Sita and Rama, as well as being an actual marriage ceremony. Besides this particular marriage, six

hundred Indian girls from the nearby villages, who had also been married recently, were given their 'good luck kits' personally by Paramahamsaji himself.

"When you leave everything to God," Paramahamsaji would say, "you will have joy and satisfaction. The sum and substance is that through the grace of God you were born; through the grace of God you live; through the grace of God you started on the spiritual life; and though the grace of God things happened in your life, good and bad both, as by the grace of God, not only good things happen."

Paramahamsaji spoke about God like he was speaking of an intimate friend, "The relationship of God to devotee is not one-sided; God also responds to the relationship . . . God is truth, auspiciousness and beauty." He said, "O God, accept my relationship with you. I do not want a God who frees me from the cycle of birth and death; I want a God who can change my nature, so that I may serve others."

Even as I recalled the words of my erstwhile preceptor, my mind conceived a fondness for Rama's feet and I went about singing the praises of Sri Rama (the Lord of the Raghus) with a love which gathered new strength every moment. On a peak of Mount Meru in the shade of a banyan tree sat the Sage Lomesha. On seeing him I bowed at his feet and addressed him in the humblest strain. When the gracious sage heard my meek and gentle address, O king of the birds, he politely enquired, "For what purpose have you come, O Brahmana?" Thereupon I replied, "O fountain of mercy, you are omniscient and sagacious. Tell me, blessed one, how to worship the embodied Supreme Spirit."

—Sri Ramacharitamanas



To leave the akhara, for me, was as profound as being there. I leave always with the certitude that I have experienced something of the divine plan in action. That at this remote place in the world, the spiritual truths are actually lived, and that what I originally believed and had faith in as a child, and all my life have yearned for, actually exists here as a reality. Life is lived here as it should be and at a vibration that I have not found anywhere else in the world. Here is my source, my centre. Through this time of reconnection, the spirit is strengthened. I leave and move towards the periphery, but strengthened by memories that drift in and out of my consciousness as I resume my daily life.



Incomparable as He is, He has no compeer. Sri Rama alone is Sri Rama's peer, so declare the Vedas, even as the sun really suffers diminution by being likened to myriad glow-worms. So do the great sages sing the praises of Sri Hari, each according to the flight of his own wits and the Lord lovingly hears them and feels delighted (however inadequate the praise may be); for He respects the sentiment of His devotees and is extremely kind.

Sri Rama is an ocean of countless virtues, can anyone sound His depth? I have only told you the little I have myself heard from the saints. The Lord is won only by sincere devotion and is a fountain of joy and an abode of compassion. Therefore, giving up worldly attachment, vanity and pride, one should ever adore Sita's Spouse.

—Sri Ramacharitamanas







Some Memories of Paramahamsaji

The ultimate answer

Swami Amrit Sagar shares her experience of darshan at Rikhia.

For no reason I could pinpoint, at the beginning of 2007 I started getting very restless in the ashram and apprehensive about my life purpose. Swami Sivamurti called it the 'seven year itch' and patiently listened to my 'teenage' outbursts. Beyond a doubt I wanted to be part of Paramahamsaji's mission and share his teachings, but needed something more specific. I couldn't resolve it on my own and decided to go ask Paramahamsaji directly.

Upon arriving in Rikhia for Guru Poornima 2007, my mind got totally immersed in the mantra chanting and seva. Paramahamsaji graced us with darshan and those days with him made total sense. My original question seemed so petty and egocentric in front of the tremendous work that was being done for others. One day between programs a little Indian boy came up to me. He was practising his English and I asked him, if you had the chance to ask God just one question, what would it be? And he replied, "Why did I come to earth?" "Okay," I thought, "I must ask Paramahamsaji."

On the last day, the Greek group had the special privilege of meeting Paramahamsaji. This was my chance, I was terribly nervous, but my whole life seemed to depend on it. Different people asked questions and I finally plucked up the courage to ask mine, "Why did I come to earth, this time, Paramahamsaji?" "What?!" He

said. I had to repeat the question, heart pounding louder than my voice. Then he answered, in his joking manner, but very seriously. My mind was so overwhelmed it couldn't comprehend anything. I thought at the time, "God is telling me my life purpose and I won't remember it!" He finished and moved on to some other question. I was numb and when we left, a swami came up to me and said, "Ha ha, shall always remember your carrot question." It all felt totally surreal.

Upon returning to the Greek ashram, I got hold of the DVD and watched it over and over again to hear and analyze his answer, but the power was not in the intellectual words. I realized that something very definite had changed from that moment deep inside me. I no longer felt restless or apprehensive. Paramahamsaji had not answered the question to my mind, but to my heart. He somehow conveyed a state of establishment of myself within, of contentment, of clarity, of confidence. There were no longer life decisions to make with right and wrong choices. He didn't answer me like I imagined; he freed me from the question. And in freeing me, he gave the ultimate answer.

Nothing is impossible

Swami Karuna Ratna recalls his experience during Sita Kalyanam and Guru Poornima 2009.

I was with a group of people in the kitchen, doing karma yoga. I was peeling potatoes for some time, and next to me was a group of karma yogis, who were preparing cookies. Towards the end I also made some cookies. Thousands of cookies were made that day and I made approximately one hundred. While making them a thought came to me, that maybe I should make the cookies in a slightly different way, and see if I can recognize them, but that



would be impossible. It would be impossible to be served the cookies I had made, when there were eight to ten thousand cookies being made for the thousands of people. Nevertheless, the thought was in my mind that I should make the cookies slightly differently, so I did. I started to put different lines on the cookies. The last cookie I made, I made in a shape of a heart, believing well and truly that it would be impossible for me to see those cookies again. You can imagine my surprise, when on my plate I was served four of the cookies I had made, and the heart shaped cookie I had also made arrived on my plate, and I realized that really nothing is impossible, and that the impossible is possible, where Paramahamsaji is

concerned. In that moment, many things were cleared in my mind, the above are just some experiences with our great master and guru, Paramahansa Satyananda.

There is no end

Sannyasi Devi Chandi

It was during my last visit to Rikhia, many years ago. On our day of departure in the morning, our dream finally came true: the Greek group was invited to have satsang with Paramahamsaji. It was no ordinary invitation. Our guru played the role of host perfectly and was sitting in an armchair. We were positioned in a circle around him.

We had prepared our questions very well. When it was my turn, I asked Paramahamsaji about death, "What's the best that I should do with the remaining years of my life, in terms of my loved ones, my ideas and for myself." His answer was, "There is no end. There is only continuity. I do not believe it, I know it!"

That was a comforting and reassuring answer. And in this way the years pass. I carry out my ideas with creative results, even though I think about the departure which will inevitably come some day. I continue and am happy and grateful every day that the head, heart and hands are supporting me in this.

Take care of the needs of others

Sannyasis Muktidhara and Nityabodh share their inspiration after visiting Rikhia.

A seed was sowed during these three years and, in 2006, we received from Swami Niranjana the guidance and encouragement to open a yoga centre in our city. He named it 'Yoga Dhara' and, following his instructions, we inaugurated it in January 2007.

Yoga Dhara became our chance to implement the spirit of the Akhara and the medium to propagate the

mission of Sivananda Math. Thus, we made the sankalpa to offer the profits of Yoga Dhara to Sivananda Math. In this way, the students of the centre have the opportunity to support the mission of the Akhara.

For three years now Yoga Dhara is operating and expanding due to the teachings of Paramahamsaji and the grace of Swami Niranjana. Our lives dramatically changed. They have a purpose now and have become fulfilling, just like Paramahamsaji said, "Take care of the needs of others and your needs will be taken care of."

Open your hearts and welcome Devi

Sannyasin Sankalpananda recalls his experience with Paramahamsaji during the Greek group's darshan.

I visited Rikhiapeth in December 2004 during Sita Kalyanam. The Greek group had gathered to have darshan with Paramahamsaji and I had a few questions I wanted to ask, so when I thought the time was right, I raised my hand. I asked if he could explain the basic principles of teamwork and group evolution. He turned towards Swami Satsangi, and said something which I did not catch. Then he looked at me and said, "This is not the right time for asking such mental questions. This is the time to open your hearts and welcome Devi." I froze. What kind of an answer was that? I left feeling quite disappointed.

An hour later, I was back in Tapovan taking part in one of those impressive human chains that move prasada from the truck on to the stage. Actually, I had been doing this for the past few days, but now it looked different. The speed was set by the person unloading from the truck and the last person placing the prasada on the stage. Synchronization was required by each person forming the chain. There were times when the chain went amazingly fast, while at other times it was a calm, smooth, meditative flow. If one link of the chain stopped, then the entire chain ceased.



My God! The principles of team work had just unfolded before me. Guru had not given me a verbal answer but an experience!

Later that evening, another question of mine was answered, which I had scribbled on a piece of paper to ask the guru, but never got the chance. I wanted to know if we could incorporate kirtan into seva yoga. I was in another human chain, this time moving prasada up from one floor to the next. I was positioned on the landing of the first floor and had the strenuous task of having to lift twenty kg prasada bags to the next person. Someone in the chain started a kirtan, and slowly everyone joined in including myself, but the lifting and the singing made me breathless. Yet, once again, my question had been answered with an experience: "Yes, you may definitely incorporate kirtan

into your seva yoga, as long as your breath permits you to sing," I heard Paramahamsaji say.

The importance of letting go

By Sannyasi Surdas

I was about to finish my studies in the medical school, feeling very confused and depressed about my future, but also carrying a disappointment that had to do with the healing 'handicap' of classical medicine. I felt divided between two opposing forces inside. Something very important which had to do with integrity and spirituality was missing from my life.

So, I decided to change my life completely, from materialism to spirituality. I started working as a healer and simultaneously searching for various pathways of

inner evolution. I came into contact with Swami Sivamurti, and got to know Swami Satyananda and the greatness of the integral dimension of Satyananda Yoga. When I first met him, I was impressed by the atmosphere of love surrounding him, from his sweetness, his unique laughter, his authenticity. I had also the strong feeling that every word coming out of his mouth was totally truthful, that he incarnated and spoke only the truth as his name reveals.

The huge impact on visiting Rikhiapeth lasted for months. I was intoxicated by love and compassion. I was more and more involved with the ashram in Greece and once a year I continued to visit Rikhia during the period of Sat Chandi Mahayajna.

In one of those trips I was truly blessed to have an amazing experience. Paramahamsaji said, "I have been very successful in performing your bypass surgeries and help you to become more selfless. I heal your hearts so they are able to love and give. So allow me to perform the heart surgery. Will you?" That same night, something really magical happened. I felt that my heart was healing from a very deep wound that has been there from way back. There was a heart problem which had not only taken place in the physical body, but also in the mental and spiritual bodies. There was something that squeezed and closed my heart, something that provoked disequilibrium and instability to my heart centre, something that prevented me from relating with others, share, forgive, accept, love and be able to forget about my ego and finally let go. After this moment, this 'something' has definitely changed. My consciousness, myself and my everyday life changed direction.

Of course with some obstacles and difficulties in the beginning, but the path was there in front of me to walk on. My guru is a real and authentic teacher and I owe him such respect and appreciation. Now, every time I

come into contact with him, and concentrate on him, I approach a deeper space within me which is more silent and harmonious.

Wedding in Rikhia

By Sannyasi Durga Shakti

We were asked to come to Rikhia at least ten days before the beginning of the program, prior to the wedding ceremony. We travelled with Swami Sivamurti, Swami Bhajanananda and Sannyasi Mukti Dhara through Jordan and arrived in Kolkata in the late afternoon. For the following two days we were trying in vain to catch the train to Jasidih which was on strike. So, we decided to fetch a taxi to reach Rikhia. At this time the roads were difficult to travel, so the trip lasted ten hours without us stopping anywhere. When we finally reached the ashram, it was late at night and everybody was already fast asleep.

The next morning at seven, we had the darshan of Paramahamsaji. He wanted to know the details of our trip and of our lives. The preparations for the wedding would begin the same day. He saw us wearing the traditional geru clothes and he asked me, "What kind of clothes are you wearing? These are the clothes of renunciation! We have a wedding to celebrate. Change them immediately!" Later, he sent beautiful, precious, colourful clothes and jewellery to my room. He also put me under the personal care of Sannyasi Mantranidhi from Munger, one of his most devoted disciples, who specialized in reciting the Ramayana. She was there to guide me, give me her valuable advice on how to behave, what to wear, and explain all the traditions and customs. One of the most valuable presents that we received, was to make the acquaintance of the Buddhia family, all disciples of Paramahamsaji, that he personally had chosen to accompany the bride as her own family. They were to become our Indian parents.



The wedding ceremony was based on the ancient vedic customs and traditions. Paramahamsaji mentioned that when Alexander the Great was in India, the wedding of the daughter of the Greek general Seleucus and the Indian king Chandra Gupta took place in the same area. To honour the vedic ceremonies, many distinguished guests were invited from different spiritual and religious traditions, like yogis, Jains, Muslims, Christians, etc. A range of ceremonies took place daily to honour the events of these days. A memorable day was enjoyed by all.

Silent lessons of non-expectation

By Swami Dharmaratna

I was always wondering what is life's meaning, which temporarily satisfies the sentiments but leaves the needs of the soul absolutely uncovered. I was searching, not knowing really what I was looking for, and when I finally decided to simply let it happen, then came the great revelation! A spiritual teacher, a guru!

I travelled several times to Rikhia just to receive Paramahamsaji's blessings. Each journey has been a unique experience. One incident that I treasure most, was during Sita Kalyanam. Distribution of prasad to the people of Rikhia is a tradition of the event, and some of us offer it to the villagers in need. In the past, there was an instruction from Paramahamsaji to buy or give money for whatever prasad we thought useful. During the distribution the name of the donator and the type of donation was announced. But then something changed. The name of the donator was announced, but sometimes, the name didn't correspond to the offer of that person. In that way, someone who had offered a generous donation, was surprised to hear that he had only offered a small contribution, whereas the person who had offered the least materially, was equally surprised to find

out in public that he had made a contribution beyond their means.

In that simple yet wise way, Paramahamsaji brought us face to face with our egos and our expectations for a reward and recognition, which possibly we didn't realize that we hold. That reminded me of his own words, "It is because of selfishness that the entire personality is lost in darkness. If we practise selfless service, life will grow in happiness and the mind will become strong and powerful."

My greatest lesson

Sannyasi Amritmurti shares her experience of Paramahamsaji's grace and blessings.

In 2004, I experienced a great longing to go to India and see Paramahamsaji. The urge was so strong and so deep that rather than trying to explain it, I just followed my instincts and went. In the darshan that Paramahamsaji gave, he spoke mainly in Hindi, and from time to time he would cast an English word. I caught the word 'faith'. But what did it really mean? I had never felt faith in my life, not until 2009, when everything stopped. I had been diagnosed with cancer. It was during these months of therapy that I turned to Paramahamsaji and prayed to him. His presence was so strong that my faith was born. There was not a moment when I did not feel his embrace. He sent me love and compassion through people and circumstances. His books were a channel through which I received support and reassurance. It was the following words that helped me through my entire ordeal, "And when you are sick, remember that the days of sickness are the days of blessings. When the mind becomes calm and quiet, there is no passion, there is no fantasy, and all turbulences are subsided. Sickness brings serenity of mind."

I thank you guru for bestowing on me the greatest gift in the world.

A blessed moment

Swami Om Murti explains her experience with Swami Satyananda while in the Greek ashram, some months after he passed into mahasamadhi.

Swami Sivamurti phoned from Bulgaria, requesting the itinerary for the trip there. I asked for this to be sent to me, so that I could pass it on. I was sent the program, but it was not very neatly written, making it difficult to find the information about times, places and dates. Deep down, I knew that I had to do something in order to improve it, making it more legible.





I tried getting some help with that at the ashram. One of the swamis was very willing to help, and together we tried to make it clear and easy to understand. It turned out to

be a difficult job, and it took a long time to do. I was rather conscious of time passing, as what I wanted was to send it as soon as possible, and there was other work waiting to be done at that time, so I was under quite a lot of pressure.

Two hours later the itinerary was ready; beautiful and clear. I was so pleased to go to the fax machine to send it. The fax machine at the ashram is very efficient and reliable, but that day I tried three or four times to send the fax to the hotel in Bulgaria. It was not possible, as I could not get through.

I started feeling disappointed, as all our efforts didn't seem to have any results. Then I called the hotel, to tell them that I had been trying to send a fax. They said, "Of course you can send it, the line is okay." I tried another three or four times, but unfortunately, it was still not possible to get through.

By this stage I was really disappointed. The whole thing was so simple, yet it was taking me so much time and with no result. Near the fax machine was a beautiful big serene photo of Swami Satyananda. I turned to him, asking for help

in order for the fax to go through. The message he relayed to me was, "Don't worry, it will go." Immediately, in one second, the fax went through. I called the hotel, and they confirmed that the faxed pages had been received!

I was uplifted by this and felt so happy and fulfilled! All my disappointment turned to joy and enthusiasm! Then I remembered his words, "The spiritual powers are always with you, ALWAYS!" He is the spiritual power. His presence is here and now. He showed me this.

Chronicles

From 1992 till 2009, groups of Greek disciples and devotees have visited Paramahamsaji to receive his darshan once or twice a year. For many joining this annual pilgrimage, it was their first contact with him. Paramahamsaji resided at Rikhiapeeth from 1989, where he practised vedic sadhanas including the panchagni vidya, until his mahasamadhi in 2009. Included in this chapter as some personal memories from Greek swamis and sannyasins, who continue their pilgrimage to their guru's abode at Rikhia, and their support of his yogic and universal mission.

Little Greece in Rikhia: Sukrat Bhavan

Sukrat Bhavan has been a dream come true. The Greek people believe that, once upon a time, Paramahamsaji was Socrates. So it was no surprise when he named the Greek building 'Sukrat', which is the Indian name for Socrates. He took a very keen interest in every detail of how the building was to be constructed, and the plans for the interior: number of bathrooms, etc. It is envisioned that Sukrat Bhavan will house future generations of Greeks, as well as devotees from other countries, when they visit Rikhia.



Foundation of Sukrat Bhavan

Greek Knowers of Truth: Aristotle

Aristotle (384-322 BCE) was born in Stageira an ancient city east of Thessaloniki. He was a student of Plato and the main teacher of Alexander the Great. His writings discuss physics, metaphysics, poetry, theatre, music, logic, rhetoric, politics, government, ethics, biology and zoology. Together with Plato and Socrates, Aristotle is one of the central figures in the foundation of western philosophy. He created a comprehensive system of western philosophy. Only one-third of his original writings are extant.

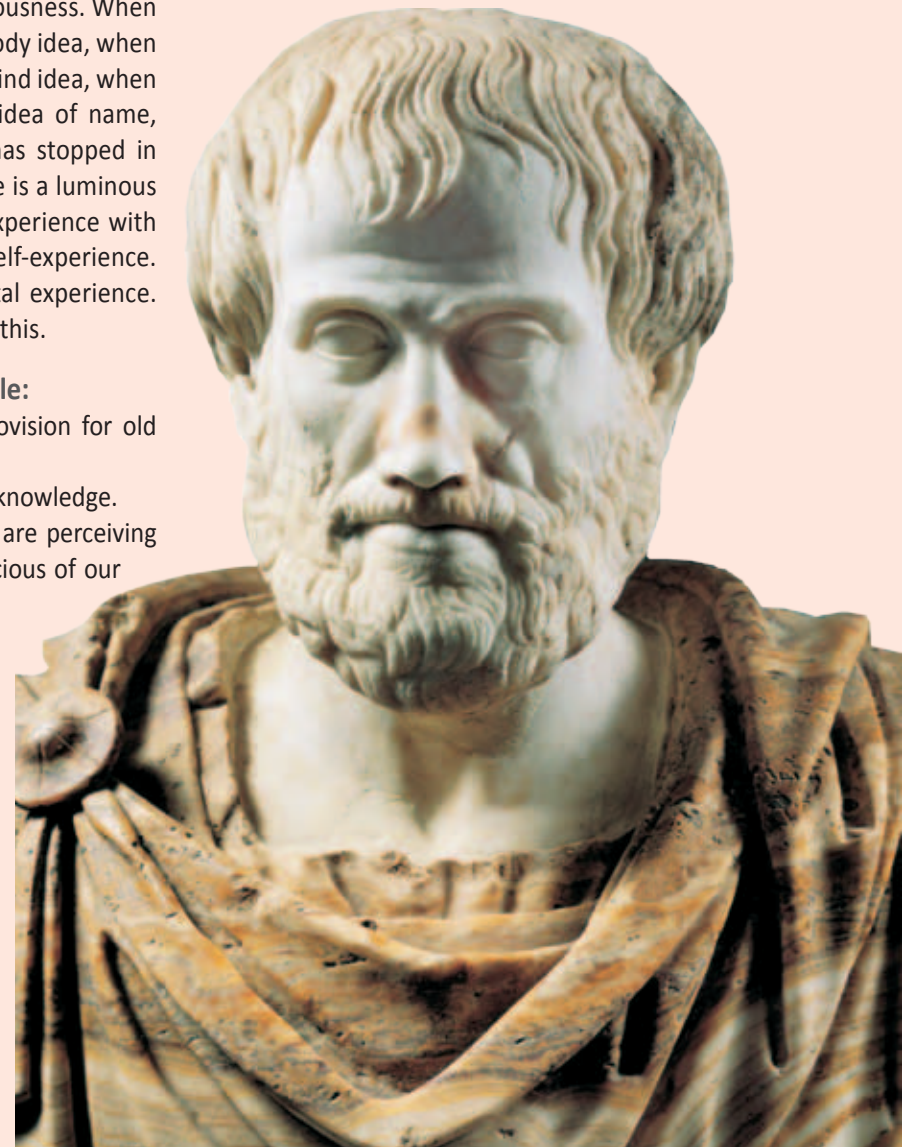
Swami Satyananda on Aristotle

Alexander the Great was a pupil of the great philosopher, mystic and thinker, Aristotle. When Alexander was in India, a lot of letters were exchanged between him and Aristotle. Alexander came to India as a hundred per cent Greek. Of course, he was an invader, but he was a Greek thinker. He came to conquer India, but the Indian gurus conquered him, and Aristotle came to know about it. Aristotle was startled. He wrote many letters to Alexander about this because he did not agree with the way Alexander had started to think after coming to India. All the dialogues of Plato and Aristotle are based on a level which is not beyond the mind. Perception and cognition are qualities of the mind. But in India, they say experience is beyond the mind. They call it anubhuti. Anubhuti is an experience

born from the higher consciousness. When you have transcended the body idea, when you have transcended the mind idea, when you have transcended the idea of name, form and me, when time has stopped in the brain, at that time, there is a luminous experience. That is called Experience with a capital E. You can call it self-experience. You can call it transcendental experience. Alexander was convinced of this.

Famous sayings by Aristotle:

- Education is the best provision for old age.
- All men by nature desire knowledge.
- To be conscious that we are perceiving or thinking is to be conscious of our own existence.



History of Satyanandashram Greece 1976–1999

Greece has exerted the greatest influence on European culture for thousands of years. Even as the stream of knowledge has flowed from Greece in historical times, in the same way, let it flow now, and let the message of yoga spread from Greece to the whole of Europe.

—Swami Satyananda

The history of Satyananda Yoga in Greece has a factual side, and also a reflective side that speaks from the hearts and minds of those people who experienced its creation, which was marked by the visits of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, our guru and our inspiration; and of his successor, Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati, also our guru and inspiration. In this history, the emphasis is on the memories that flow from our hearts through our eternal relationship with Swami Satyananda, whom we refer to in Greece as our beloved Paramahamsaji, and with Swami Niranjanananda, whom we call Swamiji. It is our story.



1976–1977

Everything that happens to you will happen for your good. There will be nothing negative; everything will be positive.

—Swami Satyananda

In 1976, the first Satyananda Yoga Centre was established by Swami Sivamurti in a small apartment in Kalamata, a city in the southern region of the Peloponnese. She shared the yogic teachings she had learnt during her stay at the ashram of the Bihar School of Yoga in India. She moved from place to place as the number of students increased and finally established the first centre in an apartment right next door to a Greek Orthodox priest. The priest believed it was his higher duty to regularly sanctify the premises as a precaution against the newly-arrived yoga ideology. Swami Sivamurti had to make a constant effort to adapt to the conservative and small-town mentality of Kalamata at that time, as its people were initially suspicious of yoga. She faced many challenges due to the influence of the Greek Orthodox church at that time which was strong throughout Greece, and its outlook was very narrow. In church they said she was a woman of Satan and a witch associated with the dark arts. However, she stayed in Kalamata and kept on teaching, and the first Guru Poornima celebration held in Greece was celebrated there.

At first people would confidentially request private yoga classes, and they would slip in and out of the yoga centre incognito. They did not want other people in Kalamata to know that they practised yoga! So she taught the students individually and was confidential

about attendance. However, this process required long gaps between classes so students would not run into one another. Eventually, in order to save time, she implemented a system where a student finishing a class would hide in the hallway cupboard and not leave the premises until the next student was safely in the yoga room. In the course of time, these attitudes changed and it was possible to start having group classes. In the beginning these had to be strictly separate for men and women. Only towards the end of her stay in Kalamata was she able to teach yoga to both at the same time. As Swami Sivamurti did not speak any Greek, each lesson had to be translated by the first Greek karma yogis and written with Latin characters so that she could read out the lessons phonetically in Greek.

The centre in Kalamata changed premises three or four times, as more and more people became interested in yoga. This interest spread north from Kalamata to Athens and other parts of Greece, and so it followed that Swami Sivamurti started to give lectures and seminars throughout the country. Eventually, she was dividing her time equally between Kalamata and Athens and, as the majority of students lived in Athens, she decided to settle there in 1977.

|| *Everything that happens to
you will happen for your good.
There will be nothing negative;
everything will be positive.* ||

1978

Swami Satyananda Visits Greece for the First Time

The Greeks are bhaktas.

—Swami Satyananda

Swami Sivamurti: About eighteen months after I had started teaching yoga in Greece, I heard that Paramahamsaji was going to Spain. I decided to go and meet him there, as I was longing to see him. The last time I had seen him in India he had said he would not come to Greece, and that last 'no' was still very strong in my mind. When I saw him, I mustered the courage to ask the question a second time, and said, "Paramahamsaji, will you come to Greece?" He looked at me as though he had never said he would not come to Greece and, smiling, responded, "Of course I am coming to Greece. Get it organized for me. I will be there in a few months time." So Paramahamsaji made his first visit to Athens and Kalamata in January 1978. It was during this visit, I remember the moment very clearly, when we were sitting in a car, he turned around to me and said with a smile, "The Greeks are bhaktas."

In Athens, during 1977–78, the first yoga classes took place in a tiny flat in Syrou Street in the suburb of Kypseli. Classes started with eight students who were taught hatha yoga and meditation. The furniture was fixed to the floor and the students used to adapt themselves around the furniture. Athens, being a cosmopolitan city, soon

About eighteen months after I had started teaching yoga in Greece, I heard that Paramahamsaji was going to Spain. I decided to go and meet him there, as I was longing to see him. The last time I had seen him in India he had said he would not come to Greece, and that last 'no' was still very strong in my mind. When I saw him, I mustered the courage to ask the question a second time, and said, "Paramahamsaji, will you come to Greece?" He looked at me as though he had never said he would not come to Greece and, smiling, responded, "Of course I am coming to Greece."

attracted many people who became interested in yoga after they heard it was being taught there. Later on, the centre started operating from Drosopoulou Street.

Upon returning from Spain, Swami Sivamurti held seminars in Athens and Kalamata, to prepare the ground for Paramahamsaji's first visit to Greece. Paramahamsaji was accompanied by Swami Amritananda (India). He gave public lectures in both Athens and Kalamata, as well as satsangs in private homes and in both yoga centres. He gave mantra diksha during his first tour of Greece.

In 1978, Satyanandashram Greece was officially established as a non-profit association with its headquarters in Athens. There were twenty-five founding members.

1979

Swami Satyananda Visits Greece for the Second Time

Swami Niranjanananda Visits Greece for the First Time

Do not stay in one place. If the need is elsewhere, be prepared to go elsewhere.

—Swami Satyananda

Swami Sivamurti: Swami Satyananda had said to me in India, "Do not stay in one place. If the need is elsewhere,

be prepared to go elsewhere. Be prepared for anything: TV, lectures, travel, classes, etc." So, within a very short span of time, I started travelling to other places in Greece, apart from Athens and Kalamata.

1979 was the only year in our history that we were graced with visits from both Swami Satyananda and Swami Niranjanananda.

Swami Niranjanananda visited Greece for the first time in June 1979 for approximately three weeks. He gave seminars and public lectures in Athens and Kalamata. At the same time, the first Teacher Training Course was conducted by Swami Sivamurti and he contributed to the course with his wisdom and profound insights on yoga. Following his stay in Greece, he went to Zinal, Switzerland, accompanied by Swami Sivamurti, for a seminar on kriya yoga which was organized by the French Federation of Yoga.

Swami Satyananda, accompanied by Swami Amritananda (India), visited Greece for the second time in August 1979, and the enthusiasm which followed this second visit led to us moving to a more spacious apartment in nearby Eptanisou Street, Kypseli. The centre could comfortably fit twelve people for a class. As classes grew, this centre was extended and included the adjoining apartment. During Swami Satyananda's tour, he initiated the first Greek disciple into poorna sannyasa (Swami Devamurti).

During this year, Swami Santaram (Spain) also visited Greece and gave seminars at the Kypseli centre.

Wandering Seminars in Greece and Abroad 1980s



1980

Swami Satyananda Visits Greece for the Third Time

You cannot do everything alone.

—Swami Satyananda

Swami Sivamurti: During 1980, we continued to operate from the Kypseli centre which was transforming itself into an ashram. During Swami Satyananda's 1980 tour he told me, "You cannot do everything alone." He repeated this to me two or three times. This soon became the case and it was impossible for me to handle all the cooking, the reception, the offices, the classes, and the travelling, plus the studying, on my own. The Teacher Training Course that began the previous year was completed and new teachers started helping with the classes.

Swami Satyananda, accompanied by Swami Amritananda (India), visited Greece for the third time, and lectured on yoga at various venues in Athens for three days at the end of April. He initiated two disciples into poorna sannyasa (Swami Bhajanananda and Swami Poornananda).

Under Swami Sivamurti's guidance, karma yoga and other aspects of a traditional ashram style of living were implemented at Kypseli yoga centre.

Swami Sivamurti lectured and gave seminars on the islands of Sifnos and Syros, and in the cities of Chania, Corinth, Heraklio, Lamia, Larissa, Patra, Thessaloniki, and Volos, as well as her regular visits to Kalamata.

From the beginning of the 1980s, Swami Sivamurti started to conduct the popular wandering seminars for the adventurous at heart. These took place on the move in the beautiful natural surroundings of Greece, on an island, or in the mountains. One learnt to live in the present moment and handle change and challenges with a yogic attitude. At bedtime one might find themselves on a beach, in an old farmhouse, on a mountain top, or in a hotel.

In October of the same year, Swami Satyananda returned to Europe, and was a special guest at the sixth International Yoga Week in Zinal, Switzerland. Swami Sivamurti and Swami Bhajanananda, as well as a group of Greek disciples, also attended this forum. Later in the month, Swami Satyananda travelled to Colombia to preside over the International Yoga Convention there. Swami Amritananda (India) and Swami Sivamurti accompanied him.

The first Greek Yoga magazine was produced and, for many newcomers to yoga, this gave them the first glimpse into Swami Satyananda's yogic teachings in their own language.

*Swami Satyananda, accompanied
by Swami Amritananda (India),
visited Greece for the third time,
and lectured on yoga at various
venues in Athens for three days
at the end of April. He initiated
two disciples into poorna
sannyasa (Swami Bhajanananda
and Swami Poornananda).*

1981

Swami Satyananda Visits Greece for the Fourth Time

Man is capable of incredible things, of infinite knowledge and bliss, if he takes steps to raise his level of awareness. Yoga systematically unlocks the portals of higher consciousness, and leads man beyond the horizon of limitation, to a greater vision of fulfilment within this very life.

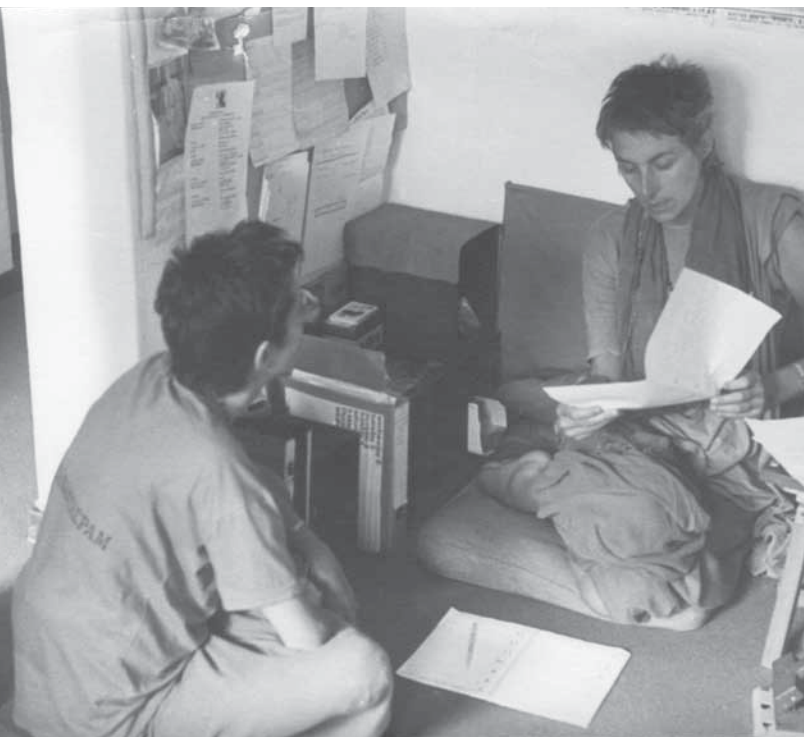
—Swami Satyananda

Swami Sivamurti: When people from different countries visited Swami Satyananda, he always had a wealth of information at his fingertips on their particular nation's arts, history, philosophy, religions, and current political situation. He had a special interest in Indian and Greek philosophies. Paramahamsaji was always most hospitable to Greeks when they visited him in India, and never lost the opportunity to make them feel more at home there by discussing their culture, philosophy, and history with them. However, he always knew more about these topics than they did. He told them, "Greek philosophy is the root of all philosophies in the western hemisphere, and vedic philosophy is the root of all philosophies in the eastern hemisphere right up to Japan. There are only two philosophies and there are only two cultures, in which

there was a very close interaction between East and West. Western astronomy and astrology are just Greek astronomy and astrology. The sciences are from Greece.”

In January 1981, Swami Sivamurti and Swami Bhajanananda led the first Greek group to visit Paramahamsaji in Munger. This was the start of annual visits by Greek devotees to India, to visit Paramahamsaji, except between 1989-1991.

During 1981, public outreach increased and Swami Sivamurti was asked to lecture and give seminars in even more cities of Greece including Edessa, Ioannina, Katerini and Veria. The main topics of her lectures revolved around



Swami Sivamurti and Swami Bhajanananda at the first yoga Centre in Thessaloniki, 1981

yoga and the development of man’s inner potential, mantra and the science of sound, and overcoming stress with yoga.

Her programs focused on how yoga could benefit those living in society, in order to prepare students and the general public for Paramahamsaji’s April visit to Thessaloniki. Swami Satyananda, accompanied by Swami Amritananda (India), was warmly welcomed to Thessaloniki, and presided over the first Pan-Hellenic Conference on Yoga and Health. This three-day event was organized by Swami Sivamurti and held at the Nepheli Hotel, Thessaloniki. During the seminar, Swami Satyananda gave mantra diksha and initiated four disciples into poorna sannyasa (Swami Nakshatrananda, Swami Gyanananda, Swami Shantipriyananda and Swami Dharmatattwananda).

Following a request by his local disciples and devotees in Thessaloniki, Paramahamsaji gave his consent to the creation of a yoga centre, and he appointed Swami Bhajanananda to direct its activities. In June 1981, a small detached house in the suburb of Harilaou became the first Satyananda Yoga Centre in Thessaloniki.

Swami Sivamurti travelled weekly to the yoga centres in Kalamata, in the south, and Thessaloniki, in the north, as well as directing the activities of the growing ashram-style yoga centre in Athens. In August she visited Finland and France where Swami Satyananda presided over yoga conventions that were held in his honour.

The first book ever compiled and published by us in English was Sparks of Wisdom of H.H. Sri Swami Sivananda and Paramahamsa Satyananda. After that, Grace of Satyam, compiled from the writings of Swami Satyananda was also published in Arabic, English and Greek, and Yoga for the Young by Swami Sivamurti (English).

1982

Swami Satyananda Visits Greece for the Fifth Time

A system of metaphysical explanations followed for hundreds of years in your country, but theoretical knowledge will not give you an experience. Your teacher will tell you the truth, your philosophers will write volume after volume on truth, but you can experience according to the quality of your own mind and nothing beyond that. You may say anything to a blind man about the sun, but he can only see the sun according to his blindness. You may sing beautiful songs and hymns before a deaf man, but he can only hear what he is capable of. Knowledge and experience must go hand in hand.

—Swami Satyananda

Swami Sivamurti: The yoga centre in the Athenian suburb of Kypseli continued. However, the need for a place outside Athens became obvious. Suitable facilities were required where we could all live together on a residential basis, as more and more people wanted to start living out the principles of a yogic life in a more natural environment. So, various people went out to different suburbs of Athens and, eventually, a traditional

type of house was discovered in the area of Pendeli on the outskirts of Athens. We moved the residential ashram to this house, but continued to teach yoga at the centres of Athens, Kalamata and Thessaloniki. Some people also resided at these yoga centres as well as teaching yoga there. We stayed in Pendeli for two years, but it also became too small in the long run. The living conditions at Pendeli were quite spartan as the ashram was just starting out. However, there was a strong dedication to the sannyasa principles espoused by Swami Satyananda.

In a two-storey building on the slopes of the Pendeli mountain, renowned for its marble used in classical Greece to create the sculptures and other works of art which are now part of the Greek and world heritage, the new ashram began. The marble from Pendeli was also used in the buildings on the Acropolis, including the Parthenon, the Temple of Athena, whose counterpart in India is Saraswati. Saraswati gives her name and protection to our branch of the Dashnami sannyasa

order. Both Athena and Saraswati are goddesses of wisdom. It was fitting that the seeds of what was to become the ashram of Satyanandashram Greece, were first planted at Pendeli.

In March, Swami Satyananda, accompanied for the first time by Swami Satyasangananda (India), visited England and Spain, and Swami Sivamurti and Swami Bhajanananda attended programs conducted by him in Manchester, England. Paramahamsaji visited Greece in October, and held a series of seminars on 'Integral Yoga' in Athens and Thessaloniki.

During Paramahamsaji's visit, he inaugurated the new ashram at Pendeli, Athens, and the newly acquired yoga centre at Panorama, Thessaloniki, and initiated two disciples into poorna sannyasa (Swami Sevaratna and Swami Shantiratna).

The first Greek language edition of Yoga Nidra was published.

1983

Yoga is going to be the culture of humanity, and no power on earth can make yoga retrace its steps.

—Swami Satyananda

This year was the only year that Swami Satyananda did not visit Greece during the period 1978–1985. He toured Europe and delivered lectures, satsangs and seminars in France, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. Swami Sivamurti attended his seminars in Switzerland.

During 1983, Pendeli became the main Greek ashram. Many people went there, after yoga classes at Kypseli, to work, to relax, and to recharge their batteries after a busy week. Others came from various parts of Greece for particular health problems, or to do further study of yoga practices, or to attend a residential program. The surrounding countryside was ideal for bushwalking and rock climbing. There were early morning classes in asana, pranayama and meditation; and kirtan or satsang in the evenings. Often, an all-night akhand kirtan was held. Residential courses included Kriya Yoga, Sannyasa Training, Teacher Training, as well as courses for the management of depression, asthma, hypertension and stress. Non-residential study courses on Raja Yoga were also offered on a weekly basis.

Swami Yogamudrananda (India) toured Greece for three months giving lectures and seminars in many Greek towns. She was guest lecturer at the Kriya Yoga and Teacher Training courses at Pendeli.



Yoga Centre in Panorama, Thessaloniki, 1982

1984

Swami Satyananda Visits Greece for the Sixth Time (April- May); and for the Seventh Time (July) for Guru Poornima

Okay, go ahead. That is the place.

—Swami Satyananda

Swami Sivamurti: In 1984, throughout the country the demand for yoga classes increased dramatically due to Paramahamsaji's visits. At some point he said to me, "It is time, Sivamurti, for a country ashram to be developed, and you should look within a seventeen to thirty kilometre radius from the centre of Athens, and find a piece of land which has at least one building on it." Just those two instructions he gave me. After this, various swamis went out to different areas of Athens.

We divided Athens into sectors, and people would go out every day, and return in the evenings reporting back on what they had found. After some months of this, two swamis came back to me in Pendeli one evening and said,

"We have found it, we have found it; absolutely, we have definitely found it!" Now I had heard those sentences before, but this time there seemed to be a different ring to their voices. They said, "You must come and see this place tomorrow. Definitely, this is the place that we have all been looking for. Swami Satyananda must have meant this place when he gave those instructions some time ago." The next morning I set out for the district known as Paiania.

I took just one step into the rose-paved pathway area of the adjoining house, and I knew, "This is the place. This is it. This is where the ashram has to be." There was a scent of roses in the air, there were peacocks walking around, and the birds were singing. There was a spring buzz in the air, and everything was in bloom. I was met by the owner, Vassilis Fotopoulos, a very well-known painter and theatrical costume designer. There was an immediate rapport and understanding; he wanted to sell, and we wanted to buy. Everything was very easy.

At that time, Swami Satyananda was in Europe. I told him of this beautiful place and, for about three-quarters of an hour, he asked me for every possible detail about the trees, about the dimensions of the property, and about the buildings, etc. At the end of the conversation, he gave his final okay. All of that time I was thinking, "Is he going to say 'yes' or is he going to say 'no' to the purchase of the land?" After some time he said, "Okay, go ahead. That is the place." So the land was sold and handed over to the organization. It became the property of Satyanandashram Greece. By this time, of course, the people living with me had become quite used to our constant moving about. Almost every year or two we changed address. We went to live in what was to become Paiania ashram in October of 1984.

Swami Satyananda toured Greece for six weeks in April-May. He was again accompanied by Swami Satyasangananda (India). Many sannyasins from abroad came to take part in

the programs, including Swami Prakashananda (Germany), Swami Anandananda (Italy), and Swami Atmananda (Singapore). Paramahamsaji visited most of the big cities, including Chania, Heraklio, Rethimno, and St Agios Nicolaos in Crete; Alexandroupolis, Athens, Kalamata, Katerini, Mytilini, Patra, Rhodes, Sparta, and Volos.

In the middle of this tour, he initiated seven people into poorna sannyasa (Swami Aparokshananda, Swami Atmagyanam, Swami Bhaktiratna, Swami Jnanamudrananda, Swami Nischalchitananda, Swami Nirbhasananda, and Swami Shaktananda), and four into karma sannyasa at Kypseli. A fifth person was also initiated into karma sannyasa during his stay at Mytilini.

At the end of this tour, before departing for Italy, Paramahamsaji said he would be back to celebrate his first Guru Poornima in Europe. This gave us only three weeks to prepare for his seventh visit to Greece and three days of Guru Poornima programs at the Nepheli Hotel, Thessaloniki. After so many seminars held there during his visits, Paramahamsaji affectionately named it the Nepheli Ashram. Guru Paduka Pooja took place on the third day at the Thessaloniki yoga centre. At the end of the festivities, Paramahamsaji announced he would return the following year to celebrate Guru Poornima again in Greece.

What is now known as Satyanandashram Greece is situated five kilometres outside the town of Paiania. When the ashram first moved there, in October of 1984, it was in a very derelict condition. Sannyasins had to wade through a one-metre-deep bed of pine needles, and feathers from the various birds that had been kept on the property in the past. There was a courtyard surrounded by storehouses. The only small house was in what we now know as Anahata. All the other buildings were inhabited by birds, hens and peacocks that had been there for a long time. Sannyasins had to seek out food with little or no money. The neighbouring

monastery was suspicious at first. However, after some time, one of the monks began to secretly bring food and gifts to the ashram and leave them outside the ashram walls. He said he understood that the sannyasins were his brothers and sisters who were walking the same path.

This was a period of strong training for the residents. We learnt to live with austerity as there was no heating, no beds, and we often lived in tents. For several years we found ways to survive with few resources. For example, we did not have a bathroom, so we dug some holes outside and used a system of flags. When you were there you held the red flag up, and when you left you raised the green flag so that people knew that it was free. To bathe, we used buckets with water from a barrel. Life was a lot of fun in those days because we had so few facilities. Every evening, Swami Sivamurti would read Paramahamsaji's books by candlelight as there was no electricity and, in this way, we absorbed his teachings.

Gradually, the new ashram became known, and people wanted to come and stay there. They would come from Greece, and other countries, to spend some time putting their energies into building and creating this visionary project. Slowly, the various buildings started to take shape and form. Dormitories were built, as well as private rooms, double rooms, rooms for three people, four people, or for sixteen people, and some with bathrooms. Dormitories to accommodate twenty people or so were finally built. Slowly the kitchen, the press, the computer room, the audiovisual centre, the offices, and the library were constructed. Over the years, as the Paiania ashram has grown and developed, many people, from all over the world, have come to Paiania and assisted us in establishing the beautiful ashram we have today. Each one brought something special and unique that has enriched us all.

During 1984, Swami Sivamurti gave many talks and seminars at the various yoga centres in mainland Greece and on the Aegean islands.

The books *Sannyasa Tantra*, by Swami Satyananda and *Light on the Guru-Disciple Relationship*, by Swami Satyasangananda, were translated into Greek.

1985 Swami Satyananda Visits Greece for the Eighth Time

It is the spirit of selflessness that makes an ashram. It is one-pointed devotion, dedication and sacrifice which creates an ashram. If one has an ulterior motive behind creating an ashram, it will not be an ashram at all. Name and fame are not at all important, that is all vanity, vanity of all vanities, because in an ashram the totality of your dedication and devotion creates a divine atmosphere. "Let people come from every race and religion to my ashram." This is called universality of spirit and I was looking for this for many years.

—Swami Satyananda

The first half of the year was a time of preparation and construction within the newly acquired ashram. Prior to Swami Satyananda's arrival, in order to let as many people as possible know about his forthcoming visit, Swami Sivamurti lectured at Alexandroupolis, Athens, Kavala, Larissa, Patra, Thessaloniki, and Xanthi, as well as several Greek islands. She also attended Paramahamsaji's March programs in London.

Much to our joy and surprise, Paramahamsaji arrived at the Paiania ashram two days before his scheduled nine-day visit. Satyanandashram Greece was inaugurated by him on Saturday, 29 June 1985. In his speech that day he said, "So, this is one of those occasions when I have come to open or inaugurate this ashram and this ashram is called 'True Bliss Ashram'. This is also very important for all of us to understand. The pleasures that are fleeting and temporary are not the truth. The happiness which you get from the world is relative, it is dependent on your friends, on money and other things, but there is a permanent state of experience called 'ananda'. Ananda is not felicity or ordinary happiness, it is a permanent state of experience which does not change at all."

On Guru Poornima, 2nd July, Guru Paduka Pooja was conducted, and Paramahamsaji initiated disciples into karma sannyasa and poorna sannyasa (Swami Atmaranjan, Swami Anandabindu, Swami Dattatreyananda, Swami Chakrananda, Swami Prasadanaanda, Swami Satyaroopananda, Swami Suryaroopananda, Swami Shraddhananda, Swami Vidyananda and Swami Yogavillasananda.) This was Paramahamsaji's last visit to Greece. He was accompanied by Swami Satyasangananda (India). A Tattwa Shuddhi and Kriya Yoga seminar was conducted by Swami Satyasangananda and Swami Sivamurti. Swami Yogashakti (Colombia) and Swami Devatmanananda (France) attended. Sannyasins, disciples, students and well-wishers from all over Greece and other parts of the world came for the inauguration and to be with their guru.

Following its inauguration, and the blessings of Paramahamsaji, the ashram and yoga centres entered a vigorous period of further organization and expansion. The seeds of yoga, planted all over Greece, had well and truly started to sprout.

The book *Yoga and Cardiovascular Management* was published in Greek.

Scenes from Satyanandashram Greece, Pendeli 1983



Satyanandashram Greece, Paiania 1985



1986–1999 The Ongoing Development

To one of the many wise men in Greece was put the same question as in the Upanishads, “What after all, is reality?” He gave just one reply, “Know Thyself.” History knows him by the name of Socrates. This is basically the subject matter of yoga, and when you know the Self, you know the mind, you know the body, you know the universe.

—Swami Satyananda

The last years of the 1980s were times of accelerated expansion, with many new yoga centres established in Athens, Crete, Corfu, Kavala, Larissa, Mytilini, Patra, and Volos. More ashram programs became available for the increased number of people who started coming from Greece and other countries. This increase also demanded further construction of ashram buildings to accommodate them.

More yoga teachers completed their training and moved out into the wider community in Greece and the neighbouring countries of Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia. In time, more people came from the Balkans to the ashram.

Swami Sivamurti continued her schedule of lectures and seminars throughout these years within Greece and abroad. The Bulgarian Yoga Association invited Swami Sivamurti to give seminars and lectures in Bulgaria

almost every year. Regular courses in Greece included kriya yoga, tattwa shuddhi, yoga nidra, antar mouna, health management, yogic lifestyle, family yoga, yoga camps for children, sannyasa training and yoga teacher training; celebrations included Guru Poornima, Sivaratri, Navaratri, Christmas and Easter; events included Open Days and gatherings for the growing network of yoga teachers and students. Swami Sivamurti travelled to Australia (Melbourne, Sydney); Bulgaria (Bankya, Plovdiv, Sofia, Velingrad); Croatia (Pula, Zagreb); Czech Republic (Nepomuk, Prague); Egypt (Siwa); Germany (Cologne, Volkings); Jordan (Amman, Wadiram); Romania (Bucharest); Serbia (Belgrade); and South Africa (Durban, Johannesburg, Lenasia, and Pietermaritzburg).

1988 was our last visit to Paramahamsaji while he was still living at Munger. In 1992, we visited him at his new residence in Rikhia. The first Sat Chandi Mahayajna was held at Rikhia in 1995, and this was attended by many Greek devotees. Since then, we have annually attended festivities and other events at Rikhia and Munger.

1993 was the Tyag Golden Jubilee World Yoga Convention at BSY, and Swami Sivamurti led a group to India to participate in the various festivities. She was also one of the guest speakers at the convention.

In 1994, she accompanied Swami Niranjanananda on his trip to Australia. Swami Vedavyasananda was initiated into poorna sannyasa by Swami Niranjanananda in Mangrove Mountain, Australia. Later in the year, she again led a group of devotees to Munger and Rikhia.

In 1996, Swami Niranjanananda was again invited to Australia, where he presided over the International World Yoga Convention in Sydney. Swami Sivamurti travelled with a Greek group to that event and to seminars at Mangrove Mountain ashram.

2000–2009

Even though Paramahamsaji has cast off his body, he is still alive and amongst us, inspiring and uplifting us to experience spiritual bliss and ecstasy, thus transforming even his departure from this earthly plane into a spiritual experience.

—Swami Satyasangananda

The history for these years is relayed in History of Satyananda Yoga in Greece, Volume Two, with Swami Niranjanananda. All through these years we felt Paramahamsaji's presence and our connection with him. On 5th December 2009, Paramahamsaji entered into mahasamadhi, and even without the physical presence of his form, we feel his dynamic personality and sweet, healing energy all the more, which has been with us in Greece right from the start.

In 2010, the Greek ashram celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, a time to look over all that has taken place both here, and in the other places we occupied before we moved to Paiania. Much has happened, at an accelerated pace, since the first yoga seeds were sown by Swami Sivamurti in Kalamata.

Yoga is now accepted without fear in Greece and throughout the western world. We no longer just focus on yoga as it relates to health, but on the many other aspects of yoga and related disciplines. We are no longer restricted to the classroom, but have moved out into the wider community, to help people apply the principles and techniques of yoga to give their lives more significance and meaning.

As each day of the new millennium passes, we see more and more doors open to fulfil, in fresh and challenging ways, our guru's mission to carry the message of yoga 'from shore to shore and from door to door'.

Satyanandashram Hellas, Paiania 1994



Satyanandashram Hellas, Paiania 2009





25th Anniversary of Satyanandashram Hellas

Swami Satyananda, accompanied by Swami Satyasangananda, inaugurated the ashram in Paiania in 1985, and gave his blessings for the growth and development of the ashram. On 17th October 2010, twenty-five years later, the ashram welcomed Swami Satyasangananda back to be present at our silver anniversary. Speeches were delivered on this auspicious occasion by Swami Satyasangananda, Swami Sivamurti and Archimandrite Father Vissarion.

Swami Sivamurti

Thank you very much for being here, on this day when we are celebrating the 25th year of inauguration of this ashram by Paramahansa Satyananda, in 1985. He inaugurated this ashram and called it the 'True Bliss Ashram'. He said it was open to everyone, to all classes, to all creeds, to all countries, and it was to be a place where one could discover oneself through yoga.

When he came in 1985, together with Swami Satyasangananda, that was his eighth visit to Greece. He started coming to Greece in 1978. When I was in India, living in his ashram, I had asked him if he would come to Greece. And he said, "I will never come to Greece." That was the first shock treatment I had from my guru. But I had also heard that sometimes what he says and what he does can be two different things. So, after coming back to Greece in 1976, I learnt that he was to visit Spain and I went

to see him there. I said, "Paramahamsaji, will you come to Greece?" It took a lot of courage to do that because he had already said no. But I was really desperate because I wanted him so much to come to Greece. So I asked him, and he replied, "But of course I will come to Greece." As though I had never asked the question before, as if it was absolutely natural that he would come to Greece. So he came to Greece and he came eight times over. On the eighth visit, he inaugurated this ashram where you are all sitting today.

He was my inspiration, he was my love, he was everything in my life, and whatever you see here today is the result of his grace. Since that time, his spiritual successor, Swami Niranjanananda has visited Greece four

times. Many of you who are here today are his disciples, so I want to mention now that the credit also goes to him, because it is also as a result of his visits to Greece that the ashram has flourished. He has sent his good wishes to all of us today together with the wish that we continue for many years to come in our effort to serve. I also want to mention Swami Satyasangananda who is sitting here with me. This is her fourth visit to Greece. She was here at the inauguration of this ashram twenty-five years ago along with Swami Satyananda. I find it very important and special that she was here then and that she is here today, when we are celebrating our silver anniversary.

I'd like to not only thank Swami Satyananda for inspiring me and giving me the opportunity to be here in Greece



with all of you and Swami Niranjanananda for coming and visiting and inspiring us all and Swami Satyasangananda for being here then and now, but I also want to thank all of you. I want to thank all of you from the bottom of my heart for being here. There are too many people to thank them all personally. But there are all the disciples, there are all the students, there are all the teachers of Satyananda Yoga whom I would like to thank.

I would also like to thank all the builders, the people who have helped to build this ashram. I'd like to thank my mother, Swami Jagadamba, whom Paramahamsaji initiated into sannyasa, because without her effort and love and support we would never have been able to purchase this land. I'd like to thank all the Greek people who have been here and supported us through the years. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. The ashram as beautiful as it looks today could never be achieved by one person. It was a team effort, we were all involved. So, I'd like to thank the people who built it, the Bulgarians especially. Without the Bulgarian support, these buildings wouldn't be here, together with the Albanians. And all of the finishing touches of the iron work have been done by local masters in this area.

There are so many people to thank, I would like to thank Swami Niranjanananda especially, because he asked me last year to prepare two albums, one on Satyananda Yoga in Greece, in relation to Swami Satyananda, and the second on Satyananda Yoga in Greece in relation to Swami Niranjanananda. Through the compilation of these books, so many memories over the last twenty-five years have come to surface. In there I have written my heartfelt thanks to all who helped in the creation of this ashram. Swami Satyananda said in his inauguration speech, "An ashram is built through selfless service. It is built through the love and goodwill of everyone who comes here." It is

not the creation of one person. In the early years he said, "You can't do everything alone, you have to build a team of people around you, you have to develop a group of people around you who will support the effort of bringing yoga to Greece." And you are the part of that team. So, thank you to all the Greek people, thank you to all the Bulgarians, thank you to all the Serbians, thank you to all the Romanians, and to the Albanians for making it possible for us to be here today, to celebrate the twenty-five years since the inauguration of this ashram with Paramahamsaji.

I'd like to invite Swami Satyasangananda who is our guest here, and has been for the last week, to address this ensemble and comment on the 'then' of how everything was, when she arrived twenty-five years ago, and the 'now', of this particular year.

Swami Satyasangananda

Thank you so much for your love.

Disciples of Swami Satyananda, disciples of Swami Niranjanananda, devotees, well-wishers and distinguished guests of Paiania Ashram. I cannot express how happy I am to be here today. Not just happy, but honoured. I have heard that history repeats itself and today I am seeing it happen. Twenty-five years ago, at this time, when I came with Swami Satyananda, I could not have dreamt or imagined that twenty-five years later I would be here, to rekindle the flame which he lit on that day. I still remember that day very clearly. At that time, there was nothing here. We were just sitting on the lawn and there were a few sheds here and there, there was a kitchen and some rooms, and just lawns. Where we were sitting, in the middle of the lawn, Swami Sivamurti was on one side of him, and I was on the other side, and there were a lot of devotees. It was a beautiful occasion and it had a beautiful ambience about it. Even then, there were

people from all nationalities, all religions, all races, and all creeds present. Even on that day, one could foresee that this place held a lot of promise. Swami Satyananda called it the 'True Bliss Ashram'. Twenty-five years later, I can say that his words have definitely come true. When I entered here, I was absolutely amazed. The ashram was glowing with divine light, and there was a feeling of happiness, joy and bliss. It was truly the place Swami Satyananda called the 'True Bliss Ashram'.

One can easily see that the purpose, the spirit with which this place was born, has been kept alive in these twenty-five years. It is very easy to start something, but it is difficult to keep the spirit alive. The seed which Swami Satyananda planted that day, twenty-five years ago, you can see it blossoming today. There is a time for everything. Before the time is right, nothing blossoms. In these twenty-five years, the selfless spirit with which the work was done here under the guidance of Swami Sivamurti, her selflessness, her sincerity, her dedication and her innocence, you can see the results of that today.

An ashram is a place where people come to work hard. It is not a monastery where monks live. The word ashram is derived from the root shram meaning 'to labour'. What does it mean to labour? It does not mean that you have to carry bricks and break stones. It is not only physical labour.



There is mental labour, there is spiritual labour, and there is emotional labour. It is a place where you come to work on yourself. For that place to flourish, to work successfully, it is important that the people who live there, who look after the place, the caretakers of that place, be simple, and lead a simple life. It is important that they are innocent, not crooked, and they have only one motive: to help others. That, I think, this ashram is fulfilling very well. Swami Satyananda may have said to Swami Sivamurti that he will never come to Greece, but what he must have meant was, “I will come when the time is right”, because he always felt a very deep connection with Greece and the Greeks. Greece has a very strong connection with India. You all know the history, I don’t think I have to tell you how the connection, the interaction between Greece and India took place a long, long time ago, politically, culturally, socially, and even philosophically. One of the greatest emperors the world has produced, was Ashoka the Great, from India, and he was half Greek. The region from which Swami Satyananda came, and where I come from, the people look like Greeks. They have the same eyes, the same nose, they have those features, even now. Many of the girls and boys from Greece must have been



married into those families. You can see those genes even now. So, you can even say that there are blood relations between India and Greece. That is why he had a great love for Greece and the Greeks had a great love for him.

Another important reason why he loved Greece was because of its contribution to philosophy. Being a philosopher himself, he could appreciate the philosophical contribution of Greece to the world, which, apart from India, no other country has been able to do. Therefore, he gave a lot of time to Greece. He travelled the length and breadth of Greece, to all the islands, to all the places, and I was privileged to travel with him.

This ashram is very fortunate because it had a great beginning and that was the blessing of Swami Satyananda, and also the blessings of Swami Niranjanananda. This morning, when I spoke to him and told him that today we are going to celebrate twenty-five years of the Greek ashram, he was very, very happy to hear that, and he sent his best wishes and blessings for the further success of this ashram, to which his contribution is also very great. The guru may give his blessings, the guru may have a vision and a plan, the guru may offer all the good wishes for a place, but it can succeed only if he gets the right disciple. Even the guru needs a medium through which he can fulfil the task which he has in mind. Swami Satyananda’s task was only one, to help the suffering mankind. That is the tradition of sannyasa in which he was initiated by his guru. We don’t belong to any sect or religion. I may have my own religion, but I don’t work for the propagation of any sect or religion. Swami Satyananda never worked for that. He had only one thing in mind. It doesn’t matter where you come from, who you are, what is your religion, what is your nationality, but if you need help, he would try to help you. That is the definition of sannyasa which he gave us. Sannyasa does not mean a monk. It is made up of two

words: sam and nyasa. Sam means total and nyasa means consecration. Total consecration. That is sannyasa.

Supposing you have ten thousand dollars and you say that you give it for the help of blind people. After that, those ten thousand dollars don’t belong to you. Supposing one day you need one thousand dollars, you cannot take it out from there, because you have consecrated it totally for the blind. In the same way, a sannyasin consecrates himself to the selfless service of others. After taking sannyasa, he does not think about himself, he thinks only about others. If he does, then he is not a sannyasin. As a sannyasin you have to give everything: your mind, your talent, your energy, whatever God has given you, you have to use it for others. That is the definition of sannyasa that Swami Satyananda gave us. He said that a sannyasin does not work for his own salvation, for his own liberation; he works for others. That is his worship. In the ashram, the sannyasins don’t sit and meditate the whole day long, if you think that is what they do. They are busy from early morning, cleaning and cooking. When the people come, they teach them yoga and help them in whatever they require. From early morning, the ashram becomes a big hub of activity, until late evening it continues like that. It is like a beehive of activity. To do all that, to make it possible, the guru needs a medium, needs a disciple of that calibre, who can maintain that spirit in the ashram, who can maintain that level of innocence, sincerity, purity. In that, without a doubt we can see that Swami Sivamurti has been very, very true to the spirit of an ashram. It is not easy; she has worked very hard. However, because of her discipleship, she was successful even in the difficulties, in the hard work which she had to do, because she received the grace of her guru. I don’t have to prove my words, you can see all around you. This land was barren twenty-five years ago. It was just like a barren hill. Today it has been

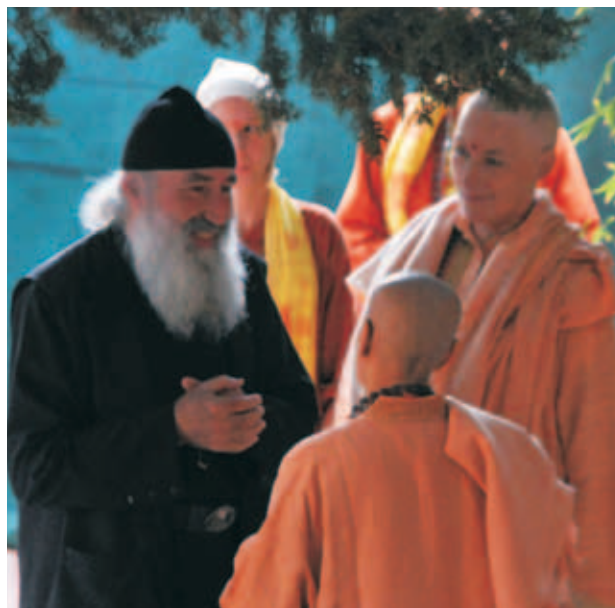


converted into a paradise. Many of you who have been with her for all those years and supported her and worked with her, are testimony to that. So, it is with great joy that I am here today, and speaking these words to you. They say that history repeats itself. Today, when we were doing the havan, the fire ceremony for Swami Satyananda, I had the vision of him coming here, once again, as a young man, and you will again have his darshan. History will repeat itself. Just keep the flame burning. That's all.

Father Vissarion

Dear brothers and sisters,

Being here again with you today brings me great joy and happiness. This occasion brings memories from ten years ago, in 2000, when I first visited the ashram of Swami Satyananda in India. He was an outstanding teacher, and just as the pupils of Christ did not recognize Christ's true



value while he was alive, in the same way, I could say, many of us were not able to recognize the true value of Guruji. It was only after he left us that we realized what he had done for India, for Greece and for the whole world. His amazing energy of giving and offering constantly, brought us to India in 2000, in order to conduct a mass in the name of the Holy Mother. Many miracles happened during our trip and stay there, and the moments that we experience today, take us back to those days. I always carry Swami Satyananda in my heart and remember his name when I conduct mass. His love and my love are forever united. I thank him for everything he has done, and for all the things he continues to do from where he is now, and for giving us his blessings. I express my respect and gratitude to him.

In the same way that we need a teacher when we start going to school, or a doctor when we are not feeling well, we need a spiritual teacher too, or a guru. This is absolutely essential in the life of every person so one can continue their personal evolution.

So, I am here with you today and feel really privileged, because we have been given this chance once again to unite ourselves in the spirit of love, in the spirit of God, and remember once again Guruji.

Thank you very much.



Paramahansa Satyananda's memorial at Satyanandashram Hellas, October 2010

